DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 393 723 SO 025 318

AUTHOR	Greene, Janet Wells; And Others
TITLE	From Forge to Fast Food: A History of Child Labor in New York State. Volume I: Colonial Times through the Civil War.
INSTITUTION	Council for the Advancement of Citizenship, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	95
NOTE	94p.; Prepared for the New York Labor Legacy Project. A Teacher's Guide for the 7th & 8th Grade course U.S. and New York State History.
AVAILABLE FROM	Council for Citizenship Education, Russell Sage College, Troy, NY 12180 ($5; more than 5 copies, $3 each).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Child Labor; Child Welfare; Civil War (United States); Colonial History (United States); Grade 7; Grade 8; Junior High Schools; Labor Conditions; *Labor Needs; Middle Schools; *Slavery; Social Studies; State History; *United States History
IDENTIFIERS	*New York

ABSTRACT

The book examines the evolving roles of children as colonial apprentices, indentured servants, slaves, and family workers in the state of New York from the colonial period to the mid-nineteenth century. Activities are suggestions only and can be adapted as needed. The chapters examine the impact of many social forces on childrens' lives and households and explore the changing concepts of "child labor." The seven chapters are entitled: (1) "Indentured Servants in the Colonial Period"; (2) "Slavery"; (3) "Apprenticeship"; (4) "Household Production in the Eighteenth Century"; (5) "From Farm to Factory"; (6) "Urban Manufacturing and Sweatshops before 1860"; and (7) "The Civil War Years." (EH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Julie E. Nerlands
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 393 723

FROM *Forge* TO FAST FOOD

A History of Child Labor in New York State

Volume I: Colonial Times through the Civil War

SO 025318

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

From Forge to Fast Food:
A History of Child Labor in New York State

A Teacher's Guide
For the 7th & 8th Grade Course
U.S. and New York State History

Volume I: Colonial Times through the Civil War

From Forge to Fast Food:
A History of Child Labor in New York State

A Teacher's Guide
For the 7th & 8th Grade Course
U.S. and New York State History

Volume I: Colonial Times through the Civil War

by Janet Wells Greene

with Teaching Strategies by
Kathleen Cotugno-Surin, Raymond A. LeBel, and Stephanie A. Schechter

Prepared for the New York Labor Legacy Project
A joint effort of:
New York State AFL-CIO
New York State Building and Construction Trades Council
New York State Council for the Social Studies
New York State Department of Labor
New York State Education Department
New York State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee
New York State United Teachers

Administered by the Council for Citizenship Education, Russell Sage College

For additional copies and information, please contact:

Dr. Stephen L. Schechter, Director
Council for Citizenship Education, Russell Sage College
Troy, New York 12180
Tel.: (518) 270-2363; fax: (518) 271-4558

Published for the New York Labor Legacy Project 1995
by the Council for Citizenship Education, Russell Sage College

The New York Labor Legacy Project was created in 1988 as the result of cooperative efforts among five state governmental agencies and three state labor organizations to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the New York State Constitutional Convention of 1938, which adopted an amendment known as Labor's Bill of Rights. The founding members included: the New York State AFL-CIO, the New York State Building and Construction Trades Council, the New York State United Teachers, the New York State Commission on the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, the New York State Department of Labor, the New York State Education Department, the New York State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee, and the New York State Workers' Compensation Board. They were joined by the New York State Council for the Social Studies in 1989-90. Since its founding, the New York Labor Legacy Project has undertaken educational programs to advance understanding of the relationships between labor and law in New York State and American history and society.

This publication may be quoted or reproduced for educational purposes without prior permission. We ask that the work be cited in all quotations and reproductions as follows: Janet Wells Greene et al., *From Forge to Fast Food: A History of Child Labor in New York State, Volume I: Colonial Times through the Civil War* (Troy, NY: Council for Citizenship Education, Russell Sage College, for the New York Labor Legacy Project, 1995).

Acknowledgment
From *Voyagers to the West* by Bernard Bailyn
copyright (c) 1986 by Bernard Bailyn
Reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Credits
Cover Design and Artwork by Leigh Ann Smith
Photo of the Mantoch Indenture by Stanley Blanchard, Schenectady, New York
Printing by Fort Orange Press, Inc., Albany, New York
Typesetting by Robin MacKenzie Prout, Wynantskill, New York

Printed in the United States of America

Contents

	Preface	iv
	Acknowledgments	v
	Introduction	1
1	Indentured Servants in the Colonial Period	3
2	Slavery	14
3	Apprenticeship	29
4	Household Production in the Eighteenth Century	38
5	From Farm to Factory	49
6	Urban Manufacturing and Sweatshops Before 1860	60
7	The Civil War Years	73

C

Preface

From Forge to Fast Food is a guide to assist teachers in fashioning their history classrooms into learning environments where curriculum content and student development meet.

The premise is simple: one way to engage young people in the study of state and national history is to make young people the subject of that study. When studying the colonial period, for example, why not examine the evolving roles of children as colonial apprentices, indentured servants, slaves, and family workers in the settlement of our state and nation? What was it like for young people to live and work in colonial times in New Netherland and New York? What do their lives at work teach us about the concepts of childhood, family, community, and society? How do these questions and the answers to them evolve with the state and the nation? How did the life of the child change in the new nation, the age of homespun, the Civil War, the age of urbanization and industrialization, and our own age of fast food and hi-tech? What are the primary examples of child labor today, and how do these compare with child labor in earlier times? What are the rights and responsibilities, and the risks and rewards, of child labor today? And what are the needs and expectations of the world at work for young people in the decades ahead?

From Forge to Fast Food: A History of Child Labor in New York State, Colonial Times through the Civil War addresses these questions and others in a collection of essays written by Janet Wells Greene and supplemented by suggested classroom activities aimed at a middle school course in U.S. and New York State History. The activities are suggestions only—designed to "jump start" teacher creativity along lines that are true to history while being developmentally appropriate.

The second volume, *From Forge to Fast Food: A History of Child Labor in New York State, From the Civil War to the Present*, consists of four essays written by Richard B. Bernstein, supplemented by suggested classroom activities. In this volume, the subject naturally shifts in the age of reform from child labor in society to child labor as a subject of political reform and public policy.

The essays, along with the other resource material in both volumes, can be used by students for individual or group projects seeking to discover what was happening not only in the nation but also in the State of New York. In this way, the essays can also enrich the teacher's classroom reference material on New York. Together, both volumes provide the teacher with a continuous history of this important yet neglected subject of our state and national history.

Acknowledgments

This publication, like all such endeavors, is a product of many hands and minds. Stephen L. Schechter coordinated the publication process from the initial recruitment of the authors to the printing of their work. He was joined by Paul F. Cole and George E. O'Connell, who as members of the executive committee, coached this publication to completion. Along the way, they diligently reviewed each draft of each manuscript with careful attention to both detail and overall design. They in turn were joined by several members of the Labor Legacy Project, especially Joyce Durgerian, George Gregory, Kevin E. Jones, and David J. Nyhan, who remained involved in this project from beginning to end providing friendly support and good counsel at each step of the process. George Gregory also reviewed the manuscript upon completion of its final draft.

Janet Wells Greene wishes to thank the many people who offered bibliographic suggestions and other advice for this project. They include Carl Prince, Thelma Foote, Jeff Sammons, Rachel Bernstein, Michael Lutzker, Michael Katz, Miriam Braverman, Steve Rappaport, Robert Scally, John P. David, Harry Rubenstein, Marilyn Petit, Jude Binder, Duncan Hay, Graham Hodges, the members of the New York Labor Legacy Committee, and museum staff members from the Lefferts Homestead and the Hanford Mills Museum. Thanks also go to archivists Gail Malmgreen, Erika Gottfried, Mary Allison Farley, and Debra Bernhardt of the Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives for their support and interest, and to Paul Mattingly, who read drafts of several chapters and offered helpful suggestions. Special thanks go to Daniel J. Walkowitz, who read drafts of each chapter and offered invaluable criticism. David and Rachel Greene lived with the project for three years. David was generous with his thoughts, advice, and criticism. The lessons themselves are for Rachel, her brother Joshua, and all our working children.

The authors were assisted in their work by the staff of the Council for Citizenship Education, Russell Sage College: Karen Birsner helped do the archival research that yielded documents for the lessons; Julie E. Herlands copyedited the manuscript; and Pamela Walker assisted in the final preparation of the manuscript. The authors of the teaching strategies were also supported by their school district, Niskayuna Central Schools, and assisted by the good counsel of Henry Mueller, chair of social studies for the Niskayuna middle schools.

Other member institutions, notably the New York State AFL-CIO, the New York State Department of Labor, and the New York State Education Department provided ongoing support for this project in a variety of ways—from the physical facilities made available for our meetings to the moral encouragement of its officials who continued to support the investment of time that project members devoted to this undertaking.

The historical content of this manuscript was reviewed by Clete Daniel, an eminent professor of labor history at the School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, and by Richard B. Bernstein, a Pulitzer prize nominee in American history and adjunct faculty member at New York Law School. The pedagogical dimension of the manuscript was reviewed by three educators: Ann K. Fronckowiak, director of social studies, Buffalo City Schools; Joyce Lipman, a social studies teacher at Junior High School #56 in Chinatown, New York City; and Andrew M.L. Turay, a social studies teacher at Morris High School in The Bronx, New York City.

A final note of acknowledgment and thanks goes to those who assisted in raising the funds needed to undertake this project. Edward J. Cleary and Paul F. Cole, President and Secretary-Treasurer, respectively, of the New York State AFL-CIO, and Henry G. Landau, then Secretary-Treasurer of the New York State Building and Construction Trades Council, reached out far and wide to AFL-CIO member organizations. Kevin E. Jones acted as intermediary to the Public Employees Federation (PEF) in soliciting their contributions. Contributions for this project were received from various labor organizations.

New York Labor Legacy Participants

New York Labor Legacy Executive Committee
Paul F. Cole
Dr. George E. O'Connell, Chair
Dr. Stephen L. Schechter, Coordinator
Joyce Durgerian, Secretary

Council for Citizenship Education
Stephen L. Schechter, Director

New York State AFL-CIO
Edward J. Cleary, President
Paul F. Cole, Secretary-Treasurer

New York State Council for the Social Studies
Steven Goldberg, President
Stephanie A. Schechter, Council Liaison

New York State Department of Labor
John F. Hudacs, Commissioner
George E. O'Connell, Deputy Commissioner of Labor
Joyce Durgerian, Supervising Labor Standards Investigator, Division of Labor Standards
Kevin E. Jones, Senior Public Work Wage Investigator, Bureau of Public Work
David J. Nyhan, Deputy Director, Division of Research and Statistics

New York State Education Department
Dr. Thomas Sobol, Commissioner
Norman Abramowitz, Supervisor of Educational Programs, Capital District Field Services Team
Dr. George Gregory, Supervisor of Educational Programs, Curriculum and Assessment Team
Ernest Wheldon, Associate, North Country Field Services Team

New York State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee
David J. Trzaskos, Executive Director
Victoria Gray, Intern
Sean Rafferty, Intern

New York State United Teachers
Thomas Y. Hobart, Jr., President
Anthony J. Bifaro, Assistant to the President
Alice Brody, Assistant in Educational Services

Introduction

Three hundred years ago, work was considered a normal part of childhood and a necessary and important aspect of a child's training for adulthood. Parents expected their children to work, either in their own household or in the household of some other family. How and where children worked depended entirely upon the circumstances of their families.

The following chapters chronicle the changing nature of work and family life for children from the colonial period to the mid-nineteenth century in New York State. These chapters show children at work as indentured servants, slaves, apprentices, and as early factory workers in both rural and urban settings. The chapters emphasize the importance of the family economy in determining what type of work children did, and trace changes in both the organization of household production and the relationship of children's work to those changes.

These chapters illustrate the variety of children's work experiences in New York State from the early eighteenth century through the mid-nineteenth century. They focus on change in four areas: the households where children lived; the nature of work; how changes in technology and transportation affected the household as a workplace; and finally, definitions of child labor as a social problem.

Possibly the most difficult concept to explain to students today is related to the fourth area, child labor as a social problem. Twentieth-century American children are required by law to attend school until a certain age. Their working hours and conditions are regulated by state and federal laws. Therefore, it can be surprising to find that in the colonial period there were no regulations prohibiting children from working. In fact, all children were expected to begin learning some kind of work after they were about seven years old. Parents began to make formal arrangements for their children to do serious work from the time they were around twelve years old.

Therefore, working children were not always seen as a "social problem" in the past. Rather, they were considered a social problem if they were *not* working. If parents could not find work for the children—especially in the case of poor children or orphans—religious or civil authorities took over the responsibility.

In the colonial period, it was not considered "tragic" that children had to work. Even opponents of slavery did not argue that slave children should not work. It was expected that some children would be "bound out" or apprenticed to a family other than their own to learn a trade, or they might live and work without pay in a household other than their own. The age and manner in which this took place depended entirely upon the circumstances of the child's parents.

Children of the poor and children of slaves, for example, could expect very different work experiences from children of craftsmen or wealthy merchants in the colonial period. Sometimes both parents who could not afford to live on their own bound themselves and their children to a master as indentured servants. This was a common practice in Europe, where families were "bound" to the land of a master, sometimes for generations.

Parents usually arranged for their children to learn to work in a household, either their own or that of some acquaintance. In exchange for their work, the children customarily received room and board, but not money.

Work without wages is another concept that modern-day students may find difficult to comprehend. Cash wages for children only became common as part of rural outwork manufacturing and the early factory system in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Families who bound their children out or who sent their children out to work for money were generally those facing difficult economic or social circumstances. Slave families, on the other hand, had no control over the fate of their children, who belonged to the master and could be sold at will. After the early decades of the nineteenth century, when many children began to go to school instead of to work, the children who worked were more likely to be those from poor families, those who

were orphaned, or those who were enslaved.

To convey to students how an after-school job today differs from the "bound" or "unfree" work that a child might have experienced in the past, it is important to recognize that in New York State in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries there were several forms of labor that are no longer common. Three of these forms are covered in the first three chapters.

Chapter 1 illustrates how "binding out" or "indentured servitude" functioned in America, and its relationship to the developing institution of slavery, which is described in chapter 2. Slavery is not generally thought of as "child labor," but of course all slave children were required to work as soon as they were able. Chapter 3 covers apprenticeship and its variations in the New World. These three forms of labor are typical of bound or "unfree" labor in the colonial period.

Chapter 4 describes the eighteenth-century household as the site of "free" labor. Today, we usually consider free labor the opposite of slavery. But in the eighteenth century, it had a very specific meaning. A "freeman" was someone (almost always male) who was not bound in any way to a master; he was also a property owner. He worked for himself in his own shop or farm where he produced goods for a market. He did not work for wages. In his work, he was assisted by his wife and children and by other household members who were biologically unrelated to him but who were a necessary part of his business or farm. Chapter 4 describes changes in households that took place during and after the Revolutionary War years and the impact of those changes on the work of children in those households.

Chapters 5 through 7 cover material which is more commonly considered "child labor" today and describe the ways in which working children gradually came to be seen as a social problem by a variety of groups. Chapter 5 describes early factory work and types of home work in rural areas. Chapter 6 describes urban manufacturing and sweated labor in New York City. Chapter 7 considers both the short and long-term effects of the Civil War on working children.

Taken together, these chapters provide a sense of the impact of many social forces on children and on their households. Chapters 4 and 7, for example, include discussions of the impact of war; chapter 2 describes how changes in the law affected slave children and their hopes for freedom.

Child labor was not defined as a serious social problem in New York State until after the Civil War. These chapters show how changes in work for children took place slowly. Some parents were grateful to have their children working, others saw children as competitors for the jobs of adults. Still others called for reform, but their demands were varied, depending upon their point of view. The New York Workingmen's Party, for example, demanded free public education for children of artisans in the 1830s; in the 1850s, the Children's Aid Society—a group of middle-class reformers—devised a plan to remove children from urban sweatshops and send them to the countryside to work and live on farms. (See chapters 6 and 7.)

These chapters can provide a foundation for students to explore the relationship between work and society and changing definitions of the nature of childhood.

Chapter 1: Indentured Servants in the Colonial Period

Colonial New York is not usually thought of as a place where indentured white children were sold to the highest bidder, but the evidence exists in bills of sale, family account books, ships' passenger lists and newspaper advertisements. The following advertisements from New York City newspapers were labeled "For Sale" and were typical of the 1750s, not just in New York, but other port cities as well:

> ** *Welsh and English indentured servants, several negro Girls and a negro Boy, and likewise good Cheshire Cheese.*
>
> ** *To be Sold, A German Servant Man, with his Wife and Son, of About Six Years old, who are to serve five Years, he is as compleat a Gardener as any in America; understands a Flower and Kitchen Garden to Perfection: Enquire of the Printers.*[1]

How these children came to be sold in America is part of the larger story of "unfree labor" in colonial history. Children arrived in the colonies as slaves and indentured servants, sometimes with their parents, sometimes alone.

This chapter is about the system of indentured servitude in colonial New York in relation to children, its origins, and how it changed during the colonial period. During its earliest years, indentured servitude and slavery shared many characteristics in colonial British America, as this chapter and the following one on slavery (chapter 2) will demonstrate.

Because indentured servitude had its origins in British society, while the British system of chattel slavery evolved in colonial America during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, indentured servitude will be considered first. Because historians know less about indentured servitude in New York than in Virginia, the Chesapeake region, and New England, some of the examples for this chapter will be drawn from those areas.

* * *

In the colonies, there were generally two groups of children who were indentured servants: children who arrived as immigrants and had to work in exchange for the cost of their voyage; and children whose families were too poor to support them.

Immigrants

Scholars estimate that one half of all the people who immigrated from Britain and Europe to the colonies between 1580 and 1775 arrived as indentured or "bound" servants—about 350,000 people.[2] Almost all of the indentured servants who came to America entered into a contract of indenture in order to pay for their passage; they were poor people seeking a fresh start. They hoped that by selling themselves as indentured servants for a few years, they would be able to get land of their own when they became free.

Contracts of Indenture

Most of these servants who came to the colonies under contracts of indenture were between the ages of twenty and twenty-four. Only about 5 percent of all emigrants from England in the 1750s were children under the age of thirteen; most indentured children were part of indentured families. [3]

Many of the youngest indentured children came from the poorest parts of Scotland; often many families from agricultural communities would indenture themselves and emigrate together.

Legally, children under twenty-one were considered minors and could not enter into contracts of indenture without the consent of their parents.

"Indenture" is a very old word for contract. It is named for the "indented" edges of the paper on which the contract was originally written. The two parties each signed a copy of the contract, then they were placed together and the edges were cut or "indented" in a pattern so that the two copies were of identical shape. Each party kept a copy, which must match the other in order to be judged authentic.[4]

Indentured servitude, like apprenticeship, was a form of "contract labor." Unlike apprentices, indentured servants received no formal vocational training and could be sold by their masters.[5]

Unlike hired laborers, who were paid in money and went home to their own homes after their work was done, indentured servants received no money, and typically lived in the household of their masters until their contracts were over.

Bound Labor

The system of indenture served two functions in the colonial economy. First, it helped insure a stable labor supply. Disease and death kept the population low during much of the colonial period, and labor shortages were common. Indentured servants were under contract or "bound" to a master to work for at least four years to repay the cost of their passage and thus insured a relatively stable source of labor for developing colonial agriculture and manufacturing. Even though such an arrangement may seem fair, in actual practice the master recovered the cost of passage within a year or two; the remainder of the time was essentially free labor for the master.[6]

When they were released from their contracts, masters were supposed to give their former servants "freedom dues." These dues were usually a few tools, a suit of clothing, or perhaps a small amount of money. Indentured servants received no wages during their years of service, unless they were experienced workmen with special skills who negotiated some form of wages as part of the initial contract. Children would not have been members of this group.[7]

The Indenture Market

The trade in indentured servants was a business enterprise in itself, not unlike the commerce associated with the slave trade. Ship captains, merchants—both British and American—and independent contractors paid the cost of passage for people who in exchange signed a contract of indenture pledging to work full-time for four years.

The cost of the passage was between three and four pounds for an adult, but when the ship arrived in the colonies, the work contracts was sold for whatever amount the seller could get—sometimes more, sometimes less than the cost of passage. Much of the selling price depended on the health, age, and experience of the person whose work contract was being sold.[8]

Servants were packed below decks on a ship for the weeks of the passage, given poor food and little air, and emerged in the colonies in a bedraggled state, often sick and helpless. The ship captains then tried to spruce them up for the sale, so they would look strong and able to work when buyers boarded the ship to look over the "merchandise." One such passenger wrote this poem to describe the process:

> *Examining like Horses, if we're sound,*
> *What trade are you, my Lad, says one to me,*
> *A Tin-man, Sir, that will not do, says he.*
> *Some felt our hands and view'd our legs and feet,*
> *And made us walk, to see if we were compleat;*
> *Some view'd our teeth, to see if they were good,*
> *Or fit to chew our hard and homely Food.*
> *If any like our look, our limbs, our trade,*
> *The captain then a good advantage made.*[9]

Ship captains sold the servants from the decks of their ships in New York harbor and other port cities, just as slaves were sold. This practice horrified some visitors to the colonies, who called it a "disagreeable business" to sell servants "as if they were horses" and to "advertise them as if they were beef and oatmeal."[10]

Technically, when indentured servants were sold, the person was not sold, as in slavery, but rather his or her "contract of indenture" was purchased by a buyer who wanted someone to work for him for a period of years. However, to the servants themselves, the process seemed very much like slavery, especially in the case of children and adults who were kidnapped.

Kidnapped Children

Kidnappers made money by "spiriting" or kidnapping poor and orphaned children and selling them to ship captains. The children were enticed, tricked, or simply stolen from the streets of London and other port cities and kept confined until the ship sailed. The ship captains brought them to America, where the children were sold as if they were legally indentured servants.[11]

There was not a great demand for children as indentured servants. In the cities along the Atlantic coast, relatively few people wanted to buy children compared to the number who wanted skilled craftsmen or young men with the strength to work in ship building and the iron industry, the two most important colonial activities in colonial New

York in addition to farming.[12] However, there was a market for children as house servants. This market was exploited ruthlessly by kidnappers in London and other port cities.

Orphans and the Poor

Poor children and orphans were placed as indentured servants by local government officials called the "overseers of the poor." Historian Michael Katz notes the policy of most towns in the colonial era was to give charity to the poor who had homes of their own and to "bind out" or indenture their children as apprentices, farm laborers, or servants. Poor adults who had no homes were driven out of town or auctioned to farmers.[13].

While the economic status of the child's family—or lack of a family—affected what kind of work a servant child might do in the colonies, geographic location was also very important.[14]

The Master's Household

Once indentured servants were purchased, they generally went to live in the household of their master. The master's occupation, his wealth, and the size of his household would influence the living and working conditions of the servant. The homes of many colonial artisans contained their shops as well, and the apprentices and servants shared sleeping and eating quarters with the family. In the eighteenth century, households were large primarily because it was customary to "find" or provide room and board for one's employees. In most cases, this "found" labor lived with the master, but sometimes he arranged for the servant or apprentice to live in a boarding house if his own house was too small.[15]

Colonial New Yorkers did not expect to have a great deal of personal privacy. Servants and apprentices quite likely shared a bed with two or more other people, whether they were living in a private household or in a boarding house.

Work

In colonial New York, Albany and New York were the largest towns, as they had originally been established as seats of government, garrisons for soldiers, and trading centers.[16] In these towns, children worked as servants in the homes of merchants, lawyers, and bankers. They built fires, carried wood and water, emptied chamber pots, swept and scrubbed floors, washed dishes, polished silver, peeled potatoes and other vegetables, helped with cooking, washing, mending, and marketing. Boys tended horses; girls learned plain sewing.

A few wealthy craftsmen had indentured servants to help with the housework, but in New York City in the eighteenth century, those craftsmen wealthy enough to hire servants frequently had slaves instead of indentured servants to do the heavy household work.[17]

Children who were indentured servants may have worked on large estates along the Hudson, both for the landowner and his tenants. These estate farmers, like southern plantation owners, also came to prefer slaves over indentured servants.[18]

Most of colonial New York, outside of its only port cities, New York and Albany, was made up of farmers and small rural settlements.[19] Farmers in New York, as in the rest of the mid-Atlantic region, raised small-grain crops and took care of livestock both for subsistence and for a growing colonial land export market. More research is needed on New York to determine if these family farms typically had indentured servants. On Long Island and in the area that is now Brooklyn, slavery was more common, even in the period of Dutch occupation.[20]

Children on family farms in the mid-Atlantic and New England regions were expected to begin work at an early age. Six-year-old children were taught to help with household production for the family's needs. They learned to weave, spin, sew, as well as tend the family's livestock and work in the garden.[21] In New England, some Puritan parents entered into agreements making their children indentured servants in other households when they were as young as seven.[22]

In the Chesapeake region, children were often full-fledged members of the workforce; many came to the colonies as indentured servants, as did most of the men and women.[23] Scholars speculate that between 50 and 80 percent of the workforce there was between fifteen and twenty-four years old.[24]

Like the plantations of the Chesapeake and southern colonies, the manor estates along the Hudson produced crops for an export market. In New York, wheat and timber gradually replaced fur as primary products.[25] The workforce on these estates, as in the southern colonies, included children as both slaves and servants. [26]

Runaways and the Law

There was a marked shortage of labor in the colonies. Disease was one cause; the abundance of free land was another. A master who purchased a slave or an indentured servant's contract was trying to insure that he would have steady help. Both slaves and servants sought to escape. Many indentured servants ran away.[27]

Both slavery and indentured servitude allowed the master control not only over the work life of the employee, but over his or her personal life as well. Historians have not examined this relationship in New York. In Virginia, however, as masters tried to enforce control over workers who wanted to run away, they became more brutal and in many cases laws which once protected the rights of the servants increasingly changed to protect the interests of the master.[28]

For example, if a servant came to the Virginia colony with an indenture that did not spell out the years he or she was to serve, it was to the advantage of the master to have the servant work as long as possible. The colonial assembly of 1642 decreed that servants who arrived in the colony at age twenty should be kept for four years, for five years if they were between twelve and twenty, and for seven years if they were under twelve. The assemblymen, most of whom were also masters, later changed the laws to benefit themselves. By 1666, servants aged nineteen or more would be indentured for five years; anyone under nineteen would serve until age twenty-four. Thus, eleven-year-olds arriving in 1642 might have been free by the time they were eighteen, but after 1666 they had to work six more years until they reached twenty-four.[29]

Servants who broke rules also had their years of service extended. Girls who bore children worked two extra years; servants trying to run away had to serve double the time they were away and four months for every two hundred pounds of tobacco it cost in reward money to catch them.[30]

Runaways were common; masters advertised for them in the newspapers of large cities along with the ads for the sale of indentured servants.[31] According to the ads, the runaways were not merely unskilled laborers, but practitioners of trades, including weavers, tailors, blacksmiths, and shoemakers. However, the servants may not have actually been skilled practitioners of these trades. Owners of the indentures, seeking to increase the value of a prospective sale, often changed the trade of their servants to fit the market once the boat docked in New York.[32]

Life After Indenture

Recent research indicates that some servants often were not given the sum of money, tools, or clothing upon their release from service that their contracts promised. This breach, coupled with an increasing shortage of land, made it very difficult for some freed servants to establish themselves as independent farmers or craftsmen and accounts for the growing numbers of tenant farmers and the poor in both rural and urban areas throughout the colonial period.[33]

Conclusion: Slavery Supplants Indenture

Problems with maintaining a stable workforce in the seventeenth century helped convince both southern and northern colonists of the value of using enslaved Africans and Native American Indians to supplement the labor of indentured servants.[34] But by the end of the eighteenth century, both New Yorkers and southern plantation owners began to use slaves more than indentured servants.

For those who employed labor, the plantation system with its labor-intensive growing seasons was best suited to using slave labor. Seasonal work in towns and any agricultural setting which had slumps or inactive periods was not an efficient use of unfree labor, which still had to be housed and fed. To control a restive workforce and to earn money on an idle investment, some masters rented out their slaves and indentured servants by the month or the year.[35] Eventually, indentured servitude was replaced by slavery or hired labor.

In New York, indentured servitude gradually disappeared as it was replaced by free labor and slavery. Only the children of the poor and manumitted slaves were indentured in the nineteenth century.

Endnotes

1. *New York Gazette*, 1732, in Samuel McKee, Jr., *Labor in Colonial New York*, 1667-1777 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935), 10, 107.

2. Richard S. Dunn, "Servants and Slaves: The Recruitment and Employment of Labor," in Jack P. Greene and J.R. Pole, *Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1984), 159.

3. Much of the information for this lesson is based on Bernard Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987). See especially pages 166-185.

4. *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary; Complete Text Reproduced Micrographically*, Volume I (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 1413.

5. Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West*, 167, n. 17.

6. Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1975), 216.

7. Ibid., 167.

8. Ibid., 324-334.

9. Ibid., 327.

10. Ibid., 324.

11. David W. Galenson, *White Servitude in Colonial America: An Economic Analysis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 187.

12. Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West*, 245-270.

13. Michael B. Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse; A Social History of Welfare in America* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1986), 13-15.

14. Constance B. Schultz, "Children and Childhood in the Eighteenth Century," in Joseph M. Hawes and N. Ray Hiner, eds., *American Childhood: A Research Guide and Historical Handbook* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 70.

15. Elizabeth Blackmar, *Manhattan for Rent*, 1785-1850 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 57-58.

16. McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 16; see also Patricia U. Bonomi, *A Factious People: Politics and Society in Colonial New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971).

17. Shane White, *Somewhat More Independent; The End of Slavery in New York City, 1770-1810* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1991), 11.

18. Blackmar, *Manhattan for Rent*, 18; White, *Somewhat More Independent*.

19. Sharon V. Salinger, *"To Serve Well and Faithfully": Labor and Indentured Servants in Pennsylvania, 1682-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press), 16-17.

20. Dunn, "Servants and Slaves," in Greene and Pole, *Colonial British America*, 180; Salinger, *"To Serve Well,"* 15-16; White, *Somewhat More Independent*, Map 2.

21. Ross W. Beales, Jr., "The Child in Seventeenth Century America," in Hawes and Hiner, eds., *American Childhood*, 31; Schultz, "Children and Childhood," in Hawes and Hiner, eds., *American Childhood*, 70.

22. Beales, "The Child," 31.

23. Morgan, *op. cit.*

24. Dunn, "Servants and Slaves," in Greene and Pole, *Colonial British America*, 163.

25. Blackmar, *Manhattan for Rent*, 18.

26. Salinger, *"To Serve Well and Faithfully,"* 16-17; Dunn, "Servants and Slaves," 175; Morgan, *American Slavery*, 108-130.

27. Morgan, *op. cit.*

28. Morgan, *American Slavery*, 215-234.

29. Morgan, *American Slavery*, 216.

30. Morgan, *American Slavery*, 217.

31. McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 106.

32. McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 106-107.

33. Salinger, *op. cit.*; Morgan, *American Slavery*, 215-234.

34. Morgan, *op. cit.*

35. McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 128.

Teaching Strategies for Chapter 1

Background for Activity A

Indentured children were orphans, family members, or even kidnap victims. Few documents remain of the indenture of adults, much less of children. Although John Mantoch was an adult, his contract of indenture allows students to study firsthand not only the wording, but the spelling of the indenture. It also allows students to see the indentations on the copy of the original, which gave it the name "indenture."

Activity A

Students will analyze and "translate" an eighteenth-century contract of indenture into modern English. They will then write a child's contract of indenture.

Directions

1. Provide students with the background information from Janet Greene's essay on indentured servants. It is important for students to know what a contract of indenture was and how children became indentured. They should also know that until the age of twenty-one, children could not legally sign for themselves. Students should understand that the expectations of children at work in colonial America were quite different from the ideas of child labor today.

2. Have students peruse the copy of the original Mantoch contract of indenture. First, have them explore the physical characteristics such as the wavy top edge and the indented flaps on the side. (Both are explained in Greene's essay.) The dark blotch on Mantoch's signature is red sealing wax. Explain that even in 1773 there were standard printed forms in use.

3. Ask students to read the first few lines. Can they read any other lines? Discuss what makes it difficult to "translate" the text of the document. Have them make a list of questions raised which will probably include the strange s's and apparent lack of spelling rules.

4. After students have explored the original, distribute the printed version on the student worksheets. They should read the document three times following the steps in the box below. **Only** then should they answer the questions on the worksheets.

5. Discuss with students how the indenture of a child would be different from Mantoch's. They should take notes for later reference. Have students create a child's contract of indenture using Mantoch's as a guide. It should be in their own words and contain the elements of the contract they studied. Students might experiment with creating their own indenture mark. This can be assigned individually or as group work.

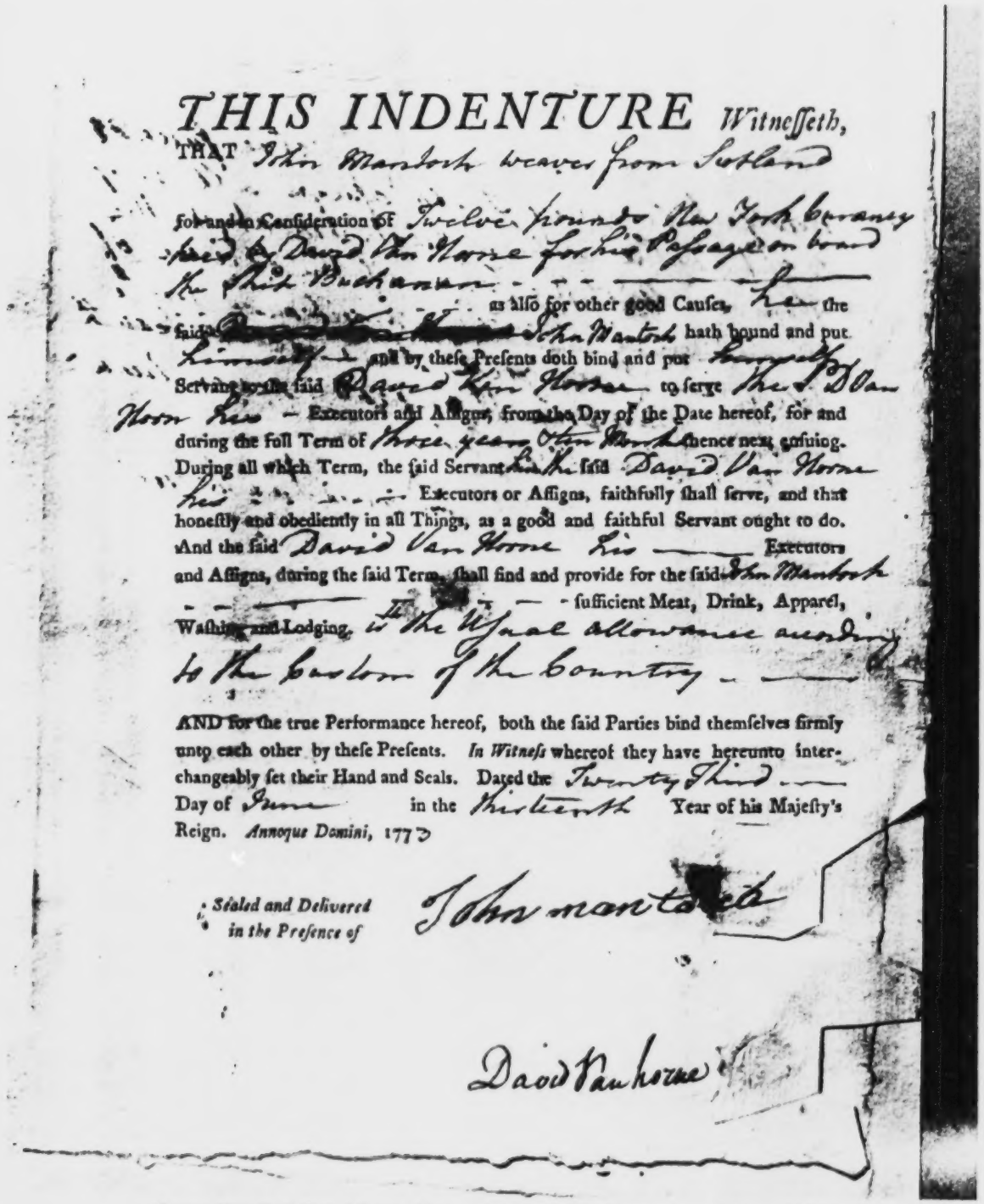
Steps to Understanding a Document

First, peruse the document for general understanding. What are its main parts?

Second, look up definitions of unfamiliar words.

Third, read the document carefully for meaning. Make an outline of the document.

Mantoch Indenture



THIS INDENTURE *Witneſſeth*,
THAT John Mantoch weaver from Scotland

for and in Conſideration of Twelve pounds New York Currency
paid by David Van Horne for his Paſſage on board
the Ship Buchanan — — — — — — — — — — — — — —
— — — — — — — — — — as alſo for other good Cauſes, he the
ſaid [redacted] John Mantoch hath bound and put
himself — and by theſe Preſents doth bind and put himself
Servant to the ſaid David Van Horne to ſerve the ſaid Van
Horne his — Executors and Aſſigns, from the Day of the Date hereof, for and
during the full Term of three years from thence next enſuing.
During all which Term, the ſaid Servant his ſaid David Van Horne
his — — — — — — Executors or Aſſigns, faithfully ſhall ſerve, and that
honeſtly and obediently in all Things, as a good and faithful Servant ought to do.
And the ſaid David Van Horne his — — — Executors
and Aſſigns, during the ſaid Term, ſhall find and provide for the ſaid John Mantoch
— — — — — — — — — — ſufficient Meat, Drink, Apparel,
Waſhing and Lodging, in the uſual allowance according
to the Cuſtom of the Country — — — — — — — —

AND for the true Performance hereof, both the ſaid Parties bind themſelves firmly
unto each other by theſe Preſents. *In Witneſs* whereof they have hereunto inter-
changeably ſet their Hand and Seals. Dated the Twenty Third — —
Day of June in the Thirteenth Year of his Majeſty's
Reign. *Annoque Domini*, 1773

Sealed and Delivered
in the Preſence of

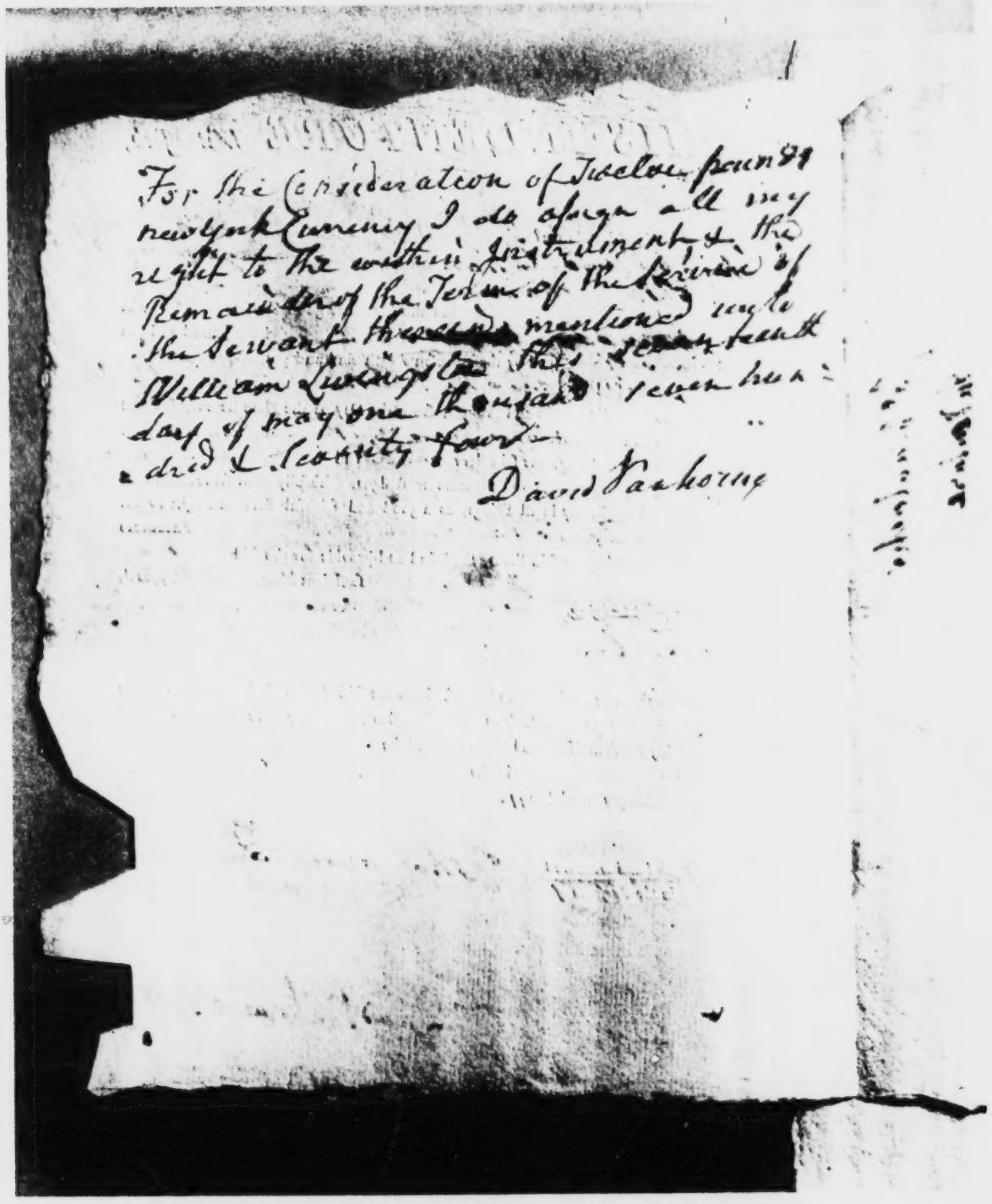
John mantoch

David Van horne

Source: New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Albany, N.Y.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Mantoch Indenture


For the Consideration of Twelve pounds
new York Currency I do assign all my
right to the within Instrument & the
Remainder of the Terms of the Service of
the Servant therein mentioned unto
William Livingston this seventeenth
day of may one thousand seven hun-
dred & seventy four
David Faehorne

Source: New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Albany, N.Y.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Mantoch Indenture

THIS INDENTURE Witnesseth,
THAT John Mantoch weaver from Scotland

for and in Consideration of Twelve pounds New York Curancy
paid by David Van Horne for his passage on board
the Ship Buchanan————————————————
————as also for other good Causes he the
said——John Mantoch hath bound and put
himself-and by these Presents doth bind and put himself
Servant to the said David Van Horne to serve the D. Van
Horne his-Executors and Assigns, from the Day of the Date hereof, for and
during the full Term of three years & ten months thence next ensuing.
During all which Term, the said Servant him the said David Van Horne
his——Executors or Assigns, faithfully shall serve, and that
honestly and obediently in all Things, as a good and faithful Servant ought to do.
And the said David Van Horne his—— Executors
and Assigns, during the said Term, shall find and provide for the said John Mantoch
—— sufficient Meat, Drink, Apparel,
Washing and Lodging. w the Usual allowance according
to the Custom of the Country—

AND for the true Performance hereof, both the said Parties bind themselves firmly
unto each other by these Presents. *In Witness* whereof they have hereunto inter-
changeably set their Hand and Seals. Dated the Twenty Third———
Day of June in the thirteenth Year of his Majesty's
Reign. *Annoque Domini*, 1773

Sealed and Delivered
in the Presence of John mantoch

David Vanhorne

Source: New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Albany, N.Y.

Answer these questions in your notes:

1. Where was Mantoch from?
2. When and how did he come to America?
3. Who bought his indenture and for how much?
4. How long was the term?
5. To what did Mantoch agree?
6. To what did the master agree?
7. Who was king and how long had he been on the throne?
8. How long before the Revolution did this take place?
9. Write the indenture in your own words. Be sure to include the key elements discussed.

Mantoch Indenture

This part of the Mantoch indenture was written on the back of the original.

For the Consideration of Twelve pounds
New York Currency I do assign all my
right to the within instrument & the
Remainder of the Term of the Service of
the Servant therein mentioned unto
William Livingston this seventeenth
day of may one thousand seven hun
=dred & seventy four—

David Vanhorne

Source: New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Albany, N.Y.

Answer these questions in your notes:

1. What has VanHorne done?
2. How long had Mantoch been his servant?
3. How much time remains of the indenture?
4. Write this part in your own words.

Bonus: Research the importance of the Livingston family in New York State history. What did you learn about their role in society?

Background for Activity B

Life as a child in colonial New York was quite different from a child's life today, especially if one was an indentured servant. Public education was not widespread. Children were expected to do arduous household chores to help support the family. Some families also employed indentured servants to perform household duties. An indentured servant might:

- build fires
- carry wood and water
- empty chamber pots
- sweep and scrub floors
- polish silver
- help with cooking and washing
- sew and mend clothes
- do marketing
- spin wool using a drop spindle
- tend the garden
- tend livestock
- clean dishes without running water
- card wool

Activity B

Students will experience and reflect on life as indentured servants in colonial New York by replicating some of the above activities.

Directions

1. Provide students with the background information from the Chapter 1 essay. It is important for students to understand the terms indenture, contract labor, and bound labor.

2. Create learning stations for several of the above activities. Students will need adequate supervision but they can

- sew seams using pieces of cut fabric
- carry pieces of wood from one side of room to the other and stack neatly
- polish silver
- scrub floor by hand with a brush
- card wool using hair or dog brushes

3. Have a small cooperative group of students perform one task at each station. Have some students engage in the activity while others take notes on the purpose of the task, the process used to complete the task, and the difficulty in accomplishing it. The note page can be divided into three parts: PURPOSE, PROCESS, DIFFICULTIES.

4. After allowing students sufficient time to engage in the activity and take notes, they should organize a presentation for the class to share their experience.

Additional Activities

Questions for discussion:

- How was the physical indenture itself made and copied?
- How did children become indentured servants?
- Explain how the treatment of indentured adults differed from that of indentured children.
- How did the nature of children at work in the colonies differ from our ideas of child labor today?
- Create an advertisement for selling an indenture or for the return of a runaway servant.
- Writing activity: Have students create a dialogue between a servant and master as they review a typical day's work. Selected dialogues can be presented or videotaped for use in class.

Vocabulary*

unfree labor
indenture
indentured servant
chattel slavery
immigration
emigration
bound labor
freedom dues
contract labor
exploitation
orphan
subsistence
tenant farmers

* Words are listed in the order in which they appear in the corresponding essay.

Chapter 2: Slavery

Children were part of the fifteen million Africans brought to the New World by slave trading companies based in Holland, England, France, Spain, Portugal, and Denmark during the 300 years of the Atlantic slave trade.[1] The slave trade was both a source of labor and a lucrative commercial enterprise for colonial New Yorkers.

Children were both workers and cargo in this economy. In the southern colonies along the north Atlantic coast—such as Maryland, Virginia and South Carolina—slaves worked at clearing land and raising tobacco, rice, cotton, and indigo for the European market. The northern colonies, such as Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and New York, became important in shipping the products of the colonies to Europe and in supplying colonial plantations with manufactured goods, including iron, rum, and firearms.[2]

This chapter will focus on five main areas in the colonial and early national period in New York: slavery as a labor system; the slave trade itself; children as members of enslaved families in New York; some of the laws that developed around slavery; and how the gradual demise of slavery in New York State affected children.

Slavery as a Labor System

Slavery was a labor system in which the laborer was owned by his master for the duration of the life of the slave. The master had control over the working lives and much of the private lives of those people who were his property. The rules and laws that governed this relationship were not imported from Europe; they developed as part of the colonial experience and will be described in more detail below.

By the mid-eighteenth century, the percentage of enslaved persons in New York was second only to Virginia and South Carolina, where slaves were a majority of the population.[3] In the colonial period, most slaves came to New York from the West Indies rather than directly from Africa.

African children and adults resisted captivity and transportation to the colonies. One captain of a slave vessel bound for New York reported an insurrection at sea in which he shot several of his cargo.[4] Many slaves continued to resist even after they were sold to plantation owners or other masters; many Africans tried to run away. But the slave merchants and plantation owners learned to thwart uprisings by mixing enslaved Africans from different tribes and regions of Africa who were unable to speak the same language.[5]

In the West Indies, newly enslaved persons were "broken in" by working on sugar plantations. They were taught what it meant to have no freedom, to be owned as one owns an animal or a tool. The overseers used the lash to keep them at work from sunup to sundown. They were fed poorly and were often worked to death. Richard S. Dunn, in his book, *Sugar and Slaves*, describes plantation life in the West Indies as "one of the harshest systems of servitude in Western history." Slaves lived only six or seven years from the time they were imported from Africa.[6] Many died; others were later brought to New York to be sold after they were "broken in."

Few children were born in the West Indies. Most of the slaves were young males; women worked to exhaustion were not able to bear children.[7]

Children in the New York Slave Trade

Despite the prevailing practice of taking slaves to the West Indies, some slaves, including children, were brought directly to New York from Africa, even though importers had to pay a duty on them. This duty, enforced until 1732, was levied on all enslaved persons "over the age of four."[8]

Apparently there was a market for young children in New York. Newspapers frequently carried advertisements like this one, which appeared in 1748 and reflected the ever-present fear of disease in the colonies as well as the demand for children as slaves:

> *Wanted, A Negro Girl between 4 and 7 years Old, that has had the Small-Pox.*[9]

Many buyers preferred children who were born in captivity. They believed them to be more docile than those children and adults who were enslaved in Africa. Owners found that people who had known personal freedom strongly resisted enslavement. By purchasing young children, owners could raise them to be household servants. Even very young children could be useful to a household; they could run errands, carry coals and water, and do other simple household tasks which did not require physical strength.

The Slave Trade and the Colonial Economy

There was much money to be made in the slave trade, and even as a sideline it could be a profitable venture. The trade was part of the system of mercantilism in which the colonies supplied raw materials to the "mother countries," who processed them and sold them back to the colonies in the form of manufactured goods. The slave trade was carried out between Africa, the West Indies, and America as well as Europe.

In New York City, the slave trade was one of a number of growing colonial trade operations that included guns, sugar, and rum.[10] The following example from the correspondence of John Van Cortlandt of New York City will illustrate how the slave trade meshed with other economic activities in the colonies.

In 1765, John Van Cortlandt, a wealthy New York City businessman, sent his representatives to the western coast of Africa with a cargo of guns. They were instructed to trade the guns for enslaved African men, women, and children and transport them to the West Indian islands of Jamaica and Barbados to become laborers on the sugar plantations there. In the islands, the slaves were auctioned in exchange for sugar or rum; the sugar was then brought to New York and sold to refiners or vendors of liquor.[11]

Van Cortlandt's venture was on a small scale—he traded in fewer than one hundred slaves in 1765. Many other New York merchants engaged in this trade triangle of guns, slaves, and sugar, but some businessmen skipped the sugar connection and brought the slaves to the Atlantic coast. John Watts of New York wrote to an associate in Salem, Massachusetts, giving his views on the optimum conditions for their slave-trading venture on the New York market in 1762:

> *For this market they must be young, the younger the better if not quite children, those advanced in years will never do [.] I should imagine a Cargo of them not exceeding thirty might turn out at fifty pounds a headgross Sales. Males are best.*[12]

Wealth accumulated from the slave trade and slave labor was an important foundation of both the prosperity of America and the growth of the Industrial Revolution, as historian David Brion Davis points out. Investments in the slave trade brought huge profits. The slave trade also brought economic growth to both the colonies and Europe. New ventures in shipbuilding, banking, insurance, and investment companies in the colonies were all linked to the slave trade. The slave trade led to the growth of seaports in the colonies and in Europe. Wealth from the slave trade was invested in canals, factories, and railroads on both sides of the Atlantic, and cotton—raised with slave labor—was the principal raw material during the industrial revolution.[13]

Infant Mortality

Slavery was a new labor system for Europeans in the American colonies and the management of the workforce was a source of constant experimentation. In its early decades, more males were enslaved than females. After 1750, slave owners had begun to import more female slaves and to learn the value of creating conditions which would allow the slaves to reproduce.

Life expectancy was short in the colonies, especially for children. Slave children on the southern plantations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries suffered from malnutrition and many died in infancy. The death rate for slave children under four was double that of whites.[14] As in the West Indies, many slaves did not live long enough to reproduce.[15]

Slavery in New York

Slavery in New York was different from plantation slavery in the Southern colonies, but it was not mild.[16] For one thing, there was little opportunity for a real community of slaves to develop because few households had more than one or two slaves. Both the Dutch and the English used slave labor in colonial New York on the farms adjoining the area that became New York City, in estates along the

Hudson River, and as far north as Albany. In 1790, slaveholders were concentrated in New York City, Albany, Kings, Richmond, Suffolk, and Ulster counties, where between 20 and 30 percent of the households had slaves. While some of these families eventually switched to hired labor before slavery was abolished in New York, families of Dutch origin tended to retain slaves on their farms up until 1827, the last moment it was legally possible to keep them.[17]

Low density in the countryside meant that slaves had less contact with other blacks and the distances were great if family members lived on other farms.[18] Advertisements such as these appeared frequently in the newspapers in the late eighteenth century:

> *For Sale: 32 year-old-male, 24 year-old-female, 15 month old child. Want to sell them together but "a few miles separation will not prevent the sale."*[19]

Separation of several miles could be almost insurmountable. Slaves had to walk everywhere. Owners typically allowed their slaves to visit a spouse once a month, from Saturday night until Monday morning. Unless the children were with the spouse, they could not be visited. Parents knew this when their children were sold away from them. The following eyewitness account of a sale was written in 1797 in Perth Amboy near New York:

> *Andrew Bell separated a child from its mother, his slave, the mother by her cries has made the town re-echo & has continued her exclamations for two hours and still continues them.*[20]

Even after the late 1790s, when it was clear that New York State would end slavery within its borders and some slaves were gaining freedom, slavery continued to separate families, as the following example illustrates.

In 1795, a slave named John Moranda was freed by his master in New York City. After a few months of freedom, he was able to purchase his four-year-old daughter, Susan, from her owner, John Haring, who lived in Bergen County, New Jersey. However, it was a full three years before John Moranda was able to save the $160 he needed to purchase his wife and son from Gardiner Jones, a "prominent physician" in New York City.[21]

Family separations were difficult to bear, but they happened frequently in New York as in other parts of America. All slaves learned to expect that their families might be broken up by sales; masters learned to use the threat of selling the children or the mother to keep unruly slaves in line.[22] Very young children under the age of four or five were usually sold with their mothers to solve the problem of feeding and dressing them. But as soon as children were between seven and ten years old, they could expect to be separated from the mother if the owner saw fit to sell one or the other.[23] As slavery was gradually phased out in New York, owners sent their slaves to Virginia and Alabama to be sold by brokers there.

If the master's household could use a larger workforce, the children were not sold. However, if an enslaved woman produced too many children, she was in danger of being sold as well, as in this advertisement from 1768:

> *To be sold, an excellent Negro Wench, about 20 Years Old, with male child, about three months old; the Wench has had the Small-Pox, can cook, wash, and iron, can be well recommended, and is sold for no other Fault than being too fruitful.*[24]

Children could not predict when they might be sold or separated from their mothers; the fear of separation was a part of the daily life of a slave child.

Households

Children lived in the households of their owners in New York, as did indentured servants and apprentices. If the dwelling were large enough, the slaves lived separately from the rest of the family, in the attic or cellar.[25]

On small family farms, slave children worked along with the children of farmers. To fill a need for some craft such as nail making or coopering, the master might apprentice his slave to a craftsman.

The enslaved children on the Lefferts Farm near Flatbush, New York, worked in both the house and in the fields in the eighteenth century. They worked side by side with the Dutch-American children of the Lefferts family. The boys chopped wood, hauled water, and cut hay; the girls baked, spun wool, and sewed for the household. Children of both genders milked the cows, fed the farm

animals, and worked at many other chores, including planting and harvesting.[26] While farmers were the largest slaveholding group, slaves were also an important part of the urban labor force as well. Slaves did domestic work for wealthy merchants and lawyers; they also served artisans.

Work

In domestic work, slaves worked under the supervision of the master's wife. Their work included trimming and filling oil lamps, cleaning candlesticks, fenders, and fireplace equipment. Wood and coal had to be hauled into the house for heating and cooking. Slaves drew water from pumps in the streets and carried it in buckets for cooking and washing. Slaves emptied chamberpots and garbage.[27]

Artisan slaveholders outnumbered merchants and retailers as slaveholders in eighteenth-century New York City, unlike Philadelphia, where artisans used indentured servants. In New York City in the late eighteenth century, slaves were owned by carpenters, coopers, cabinetmakers, upholsters, sail makers, butchers, barbers, shoemakers, and tobacconists. Historian Shane White traces the large number of free black artisans in New York in 1810 to the training these blacks must have received as slaves of artisans in the city.[28]

Slavery and the Law

The life of a slave was governed by two kinds of rules: the rules of the household and the rule of law. The master administered punishment for infractions of his rules; the law sanctioned his judgement in most cases, because slaves were his property.

The brutal whippings of southern plantations are notorious, but slavery in New York was not a gentle institution. Newspaper accounts give many examples: in New York City, a seven-year-old child was punished by flogging. His master then gave him salt to eat to make him thirsty and then kept him in a room with nothing to drink. In another case, a child who was enslaved by an apothecary was punished for stealing drugs by being chained in the attic and fed only bread and water.[29]

The rules that governed slaves had no counterpart in Europe. They were developed in each colony over a long period of time. Owners wanted to control the slaves and make the most efficient use of their labor. These laws grew harsher and restrictive as the institution developed.[30] Both the government and the owners feared slave revolts and the rules were designed to keep communication among slaves to a minimum.

Runaways and Rebellion

Slaves rebelled against their condition in many ways. In New York as in other colonies, slaves, especially those who had known freedom in Africa, tried to escape the oppression of their lives by running away, destroying the property of their masters, and occasionally by open rebellion. With each act of resistance, harsher penalties were instituted. Even small children were affected by these restrictions as they not only circumscribed their behavior but built an atmosphere of fear.

Before 1700, slaves in New York City, were required to carry a written pass when they left the home of their masters. They were not allowed to carry weapons or any item that might be used as a weapon, such as a stick. If their masters allowed them to earn money on their own, they were not allowed to buy or sell goods from free persons.

City officials feared that slaves would gather to plan escape; in 1683 they passed an ordinance forbidding more than four slaves to stand together on the street. After 1700, the law became more restrictive and extended to free persons as well: no more than three "*negroes*," slave or free, were allowed to assemble.[31]

Even outside New York City, where slaves lived widely separated on scattered farms, there were rules. Slave children could not go out alone at night; they could not go to school without the permission of their master; they could not go hunting in the woods or meet with a group of their friends. Their parents were not allowed to choose names for them without asking the master's permission.[32]

These rules developed slowly in New York, but after 1712, when a slave revolt rocked New York City, the rules became ironclad laws—part of the Slave Codes that governed the behavior of slaves in every colony.[33]

The New York City rebellion of 1712 was both a reaction against the constraints of slavery and a turning point for legislation. After it, laws were stricter and punishments were more severe. The rebellion in New York City was led by twenty-three slaves armed with hatchets, firearms, swords, and knives. They set fire to a building in the center of town and then ambushed people as they ran toward the blaze. Fifteen people were killed or wounded before the militia captured the rebels. After the rebellion, city leaders publicly executed twenty-one

people, including slaves and indentured servants, to serve as an example to any slave or servant who might be discontented with his or her life. Some were burned alive over a slow fire, others were hanged alive in chains until they died.[34]

After this revolt, a slave could legally be punished by death if convicted for trying to run away to Canada, setting fire to a haystack or building, or plotting to kill his or her master. Anyone harboring a runaway slave would be fined and punished. Local ordinance of New York City forbade any slave over fourteen years old to be out alone at night without a lantern unless he or she was with a white person.[35]

Other colonies passed similar laws as the fear of slave revolts grew and Africans and their American-born descendants continued to try to gain their freedom. As historian Edmund Morgan has noted, the brutality of the system of slavery grew over a period of generations; it also brutalized the entire society, as slaveholders and non-slaveholders alike began to accept harsh laws against African-Americans as necessary to an ordered society.[36]

Alliances: Slaves and Indentured Servants

At first these restrictions did not deter alliances between enslaved Africans and indentured servants of European origin. Slaves and white indentured servants sometimes ran away together. But as all slaves were black, white supremacy became part of the legal system, and it reinforced a separation between white servants and slaves. For example, both servants and slaves had once been prohibited by law from drinking and gambling within the New York City limits. Both servants and slaves were not allowed to travel without passes from their masters. The penalties included whipping for the slaves and servants and fines for their masters. But gradually these restrictions were lifted from servants of European descent and applied only to slaves and then to any person of African descent.[37]

For example, a New York City ordinance of 1722 said that *any* negro or Indian, slave or free, who gambled within the city limits would be publicly whipped.[38] And under the colonial laws of New York, freed slaves, whether "negro, mulatto, or Indian" could not own any property in the colony after December of 1712.[39]

Conflict

These laws reinforced the white supremacy that also surfaced during times of economic depression. When work was short for free laborers, such as blacksmiths, coopers, carpenters, cabinet makers, locksmiths, chimney sweeps, or butchers, they turned their anger against enslaved workers. In a speech in 1737, the lieutenant governor of New York said many free artisans were impoverished and were leaving the colony because they could not compete with enslaved artisans, who worked without wages.[40]

This conflict between forms of free and unfree labor would not be easily resolved, and the residue of its legacy, white supremacy, became part of the legislative history of America. The legal embodiment of white supremacy affected the lives and work of both children and adults in New York and the country as a whole.[41]

Gradual Manumission

Slavery in New York State ended gradually with legislation passed in 1799. The Gradual Manumission Act of 1799 set forth a blueprint for ending slavery, but for many slaves it offered no hope of legal freedom. Slaveowners were not required to free any of their slaves except those born after July 4, 1799. Children born after this date were not really free either. Instead, they were legally indentured to the owner of their mother until they reached twenty-five years of age for females and twenty-eight years of age for males.

In 1817, the legislature revised this law and moved the official date for the end of slavery in New York to July 4, 1827. However, this law extended the dates under which African-American children would have to be indentured to their former masters. Children born between July 4, 1799 and July 4, 1827, were to be indentured to the masters of their parents for the full term specified under the law of 1799. Therefore, many of these children remained in virtual slavery as indentured servants until the 1850s. (See chapter 7.)[42]

Running for Freedom

By the early 1790s, as other northern states began to free their slaves, slaves in New York became increasingly hard to control. The numbers of temporary and permanent runaways increased.

Slaves ran to freedom from farms to the anonymity of the city; they also ran away for shorter periods of time to visit their families. Women with children were most likely to run away to visit.[43] Four out of five runaways appearing in the ads in New York City newspapers in 1799 were young men under the

age of twenty-six;[44] between 1777 and 1805, 16 percent of runaways were under fifteen years of age.[45]

Even very small children ran away. In 1795, one New York gentleman ran an ad saying that he was suspicious of an eight-year-old who claimed his master and mistress were dead. The ad described the child and requested that the owners contact him to claim their property. Children appeared in similar ads in 1797; a child named George claimed he had been left behind by his master, and an eleven year old "French mulatto" named Catherine said that her master had gone away to San Domingo and left her.[46]

A free black community developed in New York City. Between 1799 and 1860, the free black population reached 12,000. But many slave children in New York State were sold to southerners on the very eve of their freedom.

Endnotes

1. David Brion Davis, "Slavery and the Meaning of America," in Nicholas Cords and Patrick Gerster, eds., *Myth and the American Experience* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 24-25.
2. Ibid., 25.
3. See Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1974); Peter Parish, *Slavery: History and Historians* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989), 11; Shane White, *Somewhat More Independent: The End of Slavery in New York City, 1770-1810* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1991), 154.
4. McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 119.
5. See Peter Parish, *Slavery*, 11-25 for a discussion of the historical research on early enslavement practices.
6. Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 224-62.
7. Ibid.
8. Samuel McKee, Jr., *Labor in Colonial New York, 1667-1777* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935), 120.
9. Ibid., 122.
10. Sung Bok Kim, *Landlord and Tenant in Colonial New York* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press), 146.
11. McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 14, 116, 117.
12. Ibid., 116.
13. Davis, "Slavery and the Meaning of America," in Cords and Gerster, eds., *American Experience*, 25.
14. Schultz, *op. cit.*, 69.
15. James A. Henretta and Gregory H. Nobles, *Evolution and Revolution: American Society, 1600-1820* (Lexington, MA.: D.C. Heath and Company, 1987), 42-44.
16. White, *Somewhat More Independent*, 80.
17. Ibid., Map 2; 43-55.
18. Ibid., 93.
19. Ibid., 91.
20. Ibid., 93.
21. Ibid., 151.
22. Henretta and Nobles, *Evolution and Revolution*, 92-93.
23. McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 124.
24. Ibid., 123.
25. White, *Somewhat More Independent*, 92.
26. "Lefferts Homestead - Childhood," by Firth Fabend. Exhibit text from "Black Roots on a Brooklyn Farm," an exhibit at the Lefferts Homestead, Prospect Park, Brooklyn, New York, 1990.
27. White, *Somewhat More Independent*, 43.
28. Ibid., 160-161.
29. Ibid., 87.
30. McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 140.
31. McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 140-152.
32. Exhibit Text, "Black Roots on a Brooklyn Farm," Lefferts Homestead, Prospect Park, Brooklyn, 1989-1990.
33. McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 140-152.
34. Ibid., 150-152.
35. Ibid., 152-154.
36. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 295-337.
37. Ibid., 327-328.
38. McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 154.
39. Colonial Laws of New York, I, 764, Dec. 10, 1712, in McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 133.
40. McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 127; James E. Newton and Ronald L. Lewis, eds., *The Other Slaves: Mechanics, Artisans and Craftsmen* (Boston, MA: G.K. Hall & Co., 1978).
41. Morgan, *op. cit.*, 316-337.
42. White, *Somewhat More Independent*, 152, 54.
43. Ibid., 122, 123, 128, 137.
44. Ibid., 147.
45. Ibid., 143, 147.
46. Ibid., 123, 124.

Teaching Strategies for Chapter 2

Background for Activity A

Students need to understand that slavery was a widespread institution throughout urban and rural New York. Studying slavery in New York State should be an eye-opening experience for students who will realize that slavery was not just a Southern institution. However, students should also understand that the economy of New York State did not revolve around slavery as it did in the South.

The chronology accompanying this chapter relates the history of slavery and the abolitionist movement in New York and the nation.

Activity A

Students will analyze a bill of sale of a slave family.

Directions

1. Provide students with a background on slave children from the chapter 2 essay. Then provide them with a copy of the bill of sale. Students should understand that they should first review the document before they answer the questions. Using the pointers in chapter 1 directions, have students first peruse the document for a general understanding of it. On a second reading they should look up definitions of words they do not know. Any questions students raise can be addressed at that time. The third reading is for meaning.

2. Divide students into small groups to answer the questions. If each student has her/his own copy, encourage underlining or highlighting important information.

3.Students can interview "Catharine" about her feelings concerning being sold. Using the information from the document have students develop questions for the interview. The questions can be answered for homework or several students can role-play Catharine and interviewers.

4. Follow-up class discussion should include the idea that a slave family never knew when it might be split up. After students complete Activity B on the slave timeline, have them revisit the bill of sale. Focus discussion at that time on the impending "freedom" of the children named in the document. Can they ever be free? Why?

Vocabulary

abolition
insurrection
"broken in"
mercantilism
auction
industrial revolution
domestic
white supremacy
manumission
mulatto

Bill of Sale—Catharine

Know all men by these presents that I Stephen Lush of the City of Albany Esquire for the consideration of one hundred and fifty dollars money of Account of the United States of America —thirty dollars whereof is now paid to me by Thomas Allicot of the same City as freedman and the remainder secured to be paid to me by said Thomas—have granted & bargained and by these presents do grant bargain and sell to the said Thomas a certain female slave named Catharine the wife of the said Thomas and all my right to the services of the following children of the said Catharine towit of Lewis a male child born on the twenty sixth day of February one thousand eight hundred and twelve and of Samuel a male born on the twenty seventh day of July last - For have and to hold the said female slave named Catharine and my right to the services of the children before named unto the said Thomas Executors administrators and assigns Whereof I have hereunto let my hand and seal this Twenty Third Day of August in the year of our Lord one thousand and eight hundred and fifteen.

Sealed and Delivered
in the presence of Richard L. Treat

Stephen Lush (L.S.)

I certify that the within is a true copy of a Bill of,
Sale this day given by Stephen Lush within named
to Thomas Allicot within named dated this 23rd Day of August 1815———

Richard L. Treat

Source: New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Albany, N.Y.

Bill of Sale - Catharine

Answer these questions:

1. What was the date of the bill of sale?

2. Who was the seller?

3. Who was the buyer? How is he described?

4. Who was bought?

5. For what reasons were these slaves purchased?

6. What birthdates are noted and for whom?

7. How old were these slaves at the time of the sale?

8. What does this sale mean to these slaves?

9. What kind of life can these children expect?

10. The purchase of these slaves must have been a joyous occasion. What happened to most slaves from New York during this time period?

11. Write a short skit depicting the sale and the celebration which the Allicots must have had that night! Use the information you learned about slavery. Be sure to include information from this document. The skit can be performed live or videotaped.

Activity B

Students will create a timeline poster of slavery in New York.

Directions

1. Provide students with a background on slave children from the essay. Then, provide them with the "Chronology of Slavery in New York State and the Union."

2. Divide the class into groups. Explain the accompanying student worksheet and the importance of the timeline poster. Have students complete the assignment.

3. Display the group posters around the room.

4. Through a large group discussion create a class timeline which integrates all of the information from the groups. When all your classes engaged in this activity have completed this assignment, the information on the various class timelines can be compared.

5. Have students reflect on what they learned about the history of slavery in New York State. What can they teach an adult (e.g., a parent or guardian) about it?

Additional Activities

• Compare slavery in New York State and in the South.

• Discuss the lives of slave children. What made their life so difficult and unstable? (Refer to "Slavery and the Law" in Janet Greene's essay on Slavery.)

• Write the following statement on the board to discuss: "The good of slavery outweighs the harsher realities of slavery." Focus discussion on the defense of the use of slavery. A teacher or student resource for this discussion is *Slavery Defended—The Views of the Old South*, edited by Eric L. McKitrick (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Inc., 1963). After listing those arguments in their notes, have students research how these arguments were countered by abolitionists.

• Students can create a dialogue between a twelve-year-old indentured servant and a twelve-year-old slave discussing the reasons why they might run away. Students can share this in a skit or by video or audio taping the dialogue.

• Discuss with students that they must go beyond their textbooks if they want to research a topic like slavery in New York. Texts are a limited source of information on a topic like this. Have each group agree on four important facts learned from this lesson that they could not find in their texts. The information from the groups can be compiled into a class poster for display.

A Chronology of Slavery in New York State and the Union

by Stephen L. Schechter
Russell Sage College

1626 The Dutch West Indies Company (DWIC) establishes New Netherland and creates two systems of commercial agricultural labor: patronship tenancy and slavery. DWIC initially maintained a monopoly of the slave trade. Eleven Africans were transported involuntarily to New Amsterdam in 1626.

1648 DWIC opens the slave trade to others.

1664 The English conquer New Netherland. The Duke of York becomes proprietor of New York and looks to escalate the slave trade in his role as one of the leading officials of the slave trade company, the English Royal African Company. By 1664, there are an estimated 700 blacks in the province of New York, approximately 10 percent of the total population. (Census figures do not distinguish slave and free blacks until 1785.)

1682 Under English rule, the legal status of slaves changes from servants-for-life to a separate category, and regulations are passed applying only to blacks.

1689 The estimated black population of New York is 2,170 (12 percent) of the total provincial population of 18,067. These figures remain relatively constant through the early years of the eighteenth century.

1702 "An Act for Regulating Slaves" enumerates restrictions on slaves and establishes separate judicial standard for blacks. This act was strengthened further after the slave insurrection of 1712 in New York City—the first bona fide slave rebellion in colonial America. Further restrictions were added after the fear of a slave revolt in 1730. New York had the largest slave population north of Maryland.

1723 The estimated black population of New York increases to 6,171 (15.2 percent) of the total provincial population of 40,665.

1737 The estimated black population increases to 9,021 (14.7 percent) of the total provincial population of 60,437.

1741 The so-called Slave Conspiracy is discovered. It later turns out to be a plan by a robbery ring of whites and slaves to rob wealthy home owners by setting fires elsewhere as a distraction. The disproportionate response results in the imprisonment of over 150 slaves and twenty-five whites. In addition, eighteen slaves and four whites were hanged; and thirteen slaves were burned at the stake.

1749 The estimated black population of New York increases to 10,592 (14.4 percent) of the total provincial population of 74,348.

1756 The estimated black population of New York increases to 13,542 (13.9 percent) of the total provincial population of 90,790.

1771 The estimated total population of the province increases between 1756 and 1771 nearly as much as the entire period from 1626 to 1749. The total population in 1771 is 168,007. There is a slightly smaller increase in the black population to 19,873 (11.8 percent of the total). Safer frontiers is one factor explaining the total population increase as well as the increased migration of settlers to upstate New York and the transportation of slaves upstate. Prior to this period, the overwhelming majority of blacks in the province were concentrated in New York City, Kings, Queens, and Richmond counties.

1772 In *Somerset v. Stewart*, Lord Chief Justice Mansfield rules that a slave could not be involuntarily removed from England, broadly concluding that slavery is "so odious, that nothing can be suffered to support it but positive law." This principle (that slavery had no basis in natural law and required legislative action for its authorization) became an important precedent in both English and American law; however, it did little to abolish slavery.

1777 The first state constitutional convention debates but fails to adopt the abolition of slavery. However, no mention is made in the state's first constitution of race, color, or previous servitude as a bar against voting.

1779 General Sir Henry Clinton, commander-in-chief of British forces in America, directs that slaves seeking English asylum be granted freedom. This results in the escape by many slaves to British-occupied New York City.

1781 New York passes a law promising freedom to slaves in exchange for three years military service. Also promised is 500 acres to the owner of the slave who enters military service.

1785 Each house of the New York State Legislature passes a bill freeing all children born after 1785 to slave women, but differences in language and fear of black suffrage prevent reconciliation of final passage in 1785. The New York Manumission Society was founded by John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, Philip Schuyler, Chancellor Robert R. Livingston, and others. John Jay, a slaveowner, was its first president.

1786 Despite increases in the total state population, the black population decreases to 18,889 (7.9 percent of the total).

1787 The Northwest Ordinance adopted by the Confederation Congress bans slavery and involuntary servitude in the Northwest territories. However, it also contained a provision for the return of fugitive slaves.

1787 The United States Constitution is drafted in Philadelphia. It contains several pro-slavery provisions: (1) the three-fifths clause, Article I, section 2, providing that three-fifths of the slave population in each state be counted in the apportionment of that state's direct taxes and representation in the United States House of Representatives; (2) the slave-trade clause, Article I, section 9, barring congressional prohibition of the slave trade until 1808; and (3) the fugitive-slave provision, Article IV, section 2, providing for the return of fugitive slaves fleeing from one state to another.

1793 Congress passes the Fugitive Slave Act authorizing slaveowners and their agents to seize fugitive slaves and bring them before a federal judge or a local magistrate for a certificate of removal without benefit of trial by jury.

1799 The New York State Legislature enacts the gradual emancipation of slavery providing that: (1) all male children born after July 4, 1799, to slave women are to be freed at age 28; female children at age 25. In 1790, the number of slaves in New York State was 21,324; in 1800, 20,343. By 1810, that number had decreased to 10,888; and in 1830 only 75. Gradual emancipation did not prevent slaveowners from selling their slaves before emancipation to slaveowners in slave states, and this is the fate that met most slaves in New York after 1800. Children of freed slaves could be abandoned to the care of towns.

1809 In *People v. Broad*, a court of special sessions in New York City convicts and sentences a slaveowner for assaulting and beating a slave and her three-year-old daughter.

1817 The New York State Legislature passes a law effective July 4, 1827, freeing slaves born before July 4, 1799, thereby virtually abolishing slavery in New York. However, slaveowners are still allowed to bring their slaves into New York for up to nine months.

1820 Congress adopts the Missouri Compromise admitting Missouri as a slave state and banning slavery in the Louisiana Territory north of 36~ 30'.

1821 The New York State Constitution adopted this year imposes substantial property requirements on black voting while lifting property requirements for whites. This disenfranchises most blacks who had previously been able to vote.

1836 In *Commonwealth v. Aves*, Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, rejecting an appeal to the principle of comity, follows the *Somerset* precedent and rules that a slave brought into Massachusetts is free upon entry into the state in the absence of a state law permitting such sojourner passage.

1840 The New York State Legislature passes a bill guaranteeing jury trial to alleged fugitive slaves.

1840 Blacks meet in a state convention to develop a campaign for the right to vote.

1841 The New York Legislature repeals the nine-month exemption to the abolition of slavery.

1842 In *Prigg v. Pennsylvania*, the United States Supreme Court upholds the Federal Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 and the right to recapture fugitive slaves, overturning Pennsylvania's personal liberty law against kidnapping.

1844 The annexation of Texas by treaty is rejected by the Senate, and Texas annexation and slavery become issues in the presidential campaigns of 1844. Democratic candidate James Knox Polk is strongly in favor of annexation and defeats Whig candidate Henry Clay. The following year, on July 4, 1845, Texas is admitted to the Union by the unusual method of a joint resolution passed by a simple majority of both houses of Congress.

1846 In the case of *In re Kirk*, New York Circuit Judge John W. Edmonds orders the release of fugitive slave George Kirk who had been discovered as a stowaway aboard the *Mobile* docked in New York.

1846 President Polk declares war on Mexico, precipitating the proposal of the so-called Wilmot Proviso. The congressional debate over this measure, the defeat of Mexico in 1848, and the acquisition of vast territories apparently conducive to slavery reopen the issue of the extension of slavery into the territories.

1846 The New York State Constitutional Convention votes to retain the property requirement for black suffrage. It also proposes an equal suffrage amendment to the voters, but separates it from the other proposed amendments. As a result, it is defeated.

1850 *Congress* approves a number of resolutions known collectively as the Compromise of 1850. The resolutions provide for (1) the admission of California as a free state in exchange for the organization of the remaining territories acquired from Mexico without any restriction on slavery; (2) the cession to the United States by Texas of a disputed region in exchange for the federal assumption of that state's pre-annexation public debt; and (3) abolition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia in exchange for congressional passage of a stricter fugitive slave law. Later in 1850, Congress passes a tougher Fugitive Slave Act.

1850 Eight days after passage of the Federal Fugitive Slave Act, James Hamlet of *New York City* becomes the first fugitive slave arrested under that act. Brought before the federal district court in New York City, he is denied testimony under the 1850 act, and after a brief hearing he is returned to Baltimore. The fear engendered by the new fugitive slave law and the Hamlet incident among fugitive slaves in New York City is described by Harriet Jacobs, a fugitive slave. Within a month of Hamlet's capture and return, New Yorkers raise the funds needed to purchase him from his master. On October 5, Hamlet returns to New York City where there was a multiracial demonstration of over four thousand New Yorkers.

1850 In *Strader v. Graham*, the *United States Supreme Court* rules that it lacks jurisdiction to review a case in which Kentucky's highest court decided that one of its citizens, Christopher Graham, was entitled to recover the value of his slaves from Jacob Strader, an Ohio steamboat owner who had transported Graham's slaves from Kentucky to Ohio. Chief Justice Roger Taney rules that the Court lacks jurisdiction, in part, because "Every State has an undoubted right to determine the *status*, or domestic and social condition of the person domiciled within its territory, except in so far as the powers of the State in this respect are restrained, or duties and obligations imposed upon them by the Constitution of the United States."

1852 In *Syracuse, New York*, a fugitive slave known as "Jerry" (William Henry) is arrested and brought before a federal commissioner who orders him placed in the custody of federal deputy marshal Henry W. Allen. At night, a crowd of thousands of people break Jerry out of jail in a careful plan developed by abolitionist leader Gerrit Smith and others. At the time, Syracuse is filled with visitors attending the State Liberty Party Convention and the New York State Fair. Jerry escapes to Canada; various rescuers are indicted by federal grand juries in *United States v. Reed* (1852) and *United States v. Cobb* (1857); and local residents retaliate by a grand jury indictment in Onondaga County against Allen in *People v. Allen* (1852).

1852 First published as a serial in an antislavery newspaper, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe is published in this year as a book. Before the end of the year, 300,000 copies are sold.

1852 The case of *The People ex rel. Napolean v. Lemmon* comes before Judge Eligah Paine of *New York Superior Court*.

1854 In March 1854, Congress passes the Kansas-Nebraska Act which, as proposed by Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, extends the "popular sovereignty" principle into the territories of Kansas and Nebraska.

1855 A second state black convention meets in Troy, and establishes the New York State Suffrage Association led by Frederick Douglass.

1857 On March 6, 1857, two days after James Buchanan is inaugurated president, the United States Supreme Court decides *Dred Scott v. Sandford*. In a highly controversial opinion, Chief Justice Roger B. Taney rules that: (1) the *Missouri Compromise of 1820* is unconstitutional because Congress did not

have the power to prohibit slavery in the territories; (2) Dred Scott, a slave who had been transported to the free state of Illinois and the free territory to become the state of Minnesota, cannot sue for his freedom because he is not a citizen of the United States; and (3) Scott cannot become a citizen because he is a Negro. (Scott had sued John F.A. Sanford of New York City who was the executor of the estate of the widow of Scott's owner, Dr. John Emerson, an Army surgeon.)

1857 In *Lemmon v. The People*, the *New York Supreme Court* upholds the 1852 decision of Judge Paine.

1858 Abraham Lincoln delivers his "A House Divided" Speech in Springfield, Illinois.

1859 In *Abelman v. Booth*, the United States Supreme Court, in a unanimous opinion delivered by Chief Justice Taney, overturns a decision of the Wisconsin Supreme Court which had declared the Federal Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 unconstitutional and freed Sherman M. Booth who had aided the escape of a fugitive slave from jail. The Supreme Court rules that a state court cannot overturn a federal law or overrule a federal court decision.

1859 In October 1859, John Brown and his followers take over the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, but are captured after a fierce battle with federal soldiers and local militia.

1860 *New York State voters* reject an equal suffrage constitutional amendment.

1860 In *Lemmon v. The People*, the *New York State Court of Appeals* upholds the lower court decision of 1857.

1860 In November 1860, Abraham Lincoln is elected sixteenth president of the United States.

1860 On December 20, 1860, South Carolina secedes from the Union.

1861 On March 4, 1861, Abraham Lincoln is inaugurated president of the United States.

1861 On April 12, 1861, Civil War erupts when Fort Sumter is attacked.

1862 On September 22, 1862, President Lincoln announces that slaves in territory then in rebellion will be free on January 1, 1863.

1863 On January 1, President Abraham Lincoln signs the Emancipation Proclamation.

1865 On December 6, the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, abolishing slavery was ratified.

Sources: Information for the chronology was taken from Paul Finkelman, *Slavery in the Courtroom: An Annotated Bibliography of American Cases* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1985); Philip S. Foner, *History of Black Americans: From Africa to the Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975); Alfred H. Kelly, Winfred A. Harbison, and Herman Belz, *The American Constitution: Its Origins and Development*, I, Seventh Edition (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991); and David Kobrin, *The Black Minority in Early New York* (Albany, NY: New York State American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, 1975).

Timeline of Slavery

1. In your group read the "Chronology of Slavery in New York State and the Union."

2. Agree upon five important events on slavery in **New York State** that affected the lives of slave children . Write the events in the box below. Explain how these affected the lives of slave children.

3. Create a timeline poster of the important events your group has chosen.

4. Illustrate these events with relevant visuals concerning New York State slavery. It is important that your poster be historically accurate.

Chapter 3: Apprenticeship

Nathaniel Lynus was probably about fourteen years old when he and his parents decided he should become a barber. His parents made arrangements with a barber in New York City to teach him the trade. On August 9, 1697, young Nathaniel signed a contract of apprenticeship with the barber, Nathaniel Marston, and went to live in Marston's house. In the contract, the boy promised to live with and work for his master for seven years.[1] In return, the barber would teach Nathaniel his skills, which included how to cut hair and shave beards, pull teeth, let blood, and make wigs.[2]

In colonial America, apprenticeship was another of the "bound" or "unfree" labor systems in use in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, along with indentured servitude (chapter 1) and slavery (chapter 2). But apprenticeship combined the features of an educational system with its role as a labor system.

Apprenticeship helped meet three needs in colonial society: it created a supervised environment for children and adolescents; it gave children vocational training so they would be able to earn a living as adults and not become a burden on the local parish treasury; and it ensured that the society would have a workforce trained to produce the necessities of life.[3]

Apprenticeship was part of the craft system of production. In this system, the craftsman, or artisan, and his family typically worked in their home, assisted by apprentices and perhaps slaves and servants, either hired or indentured.[4] Although the apprenticeship system survives in some skilled trades today, its form changed dramatically with the decline in household production in the nineteenth century (chapters 4 and 6).

This chapter will describe apprenticeship as part of the labor system in colonial New York, as well as its origins, rules, and variations.

Artisans, Apprentices, and the Handcraft System

Until the end of the eighteenth century, craftsmen and women in America made everything by hand. These skilled people produced all the manufactured goods in colonial society: chairs, wigs, tables, boats, bricks, jewelry, paper, soap and candles, shoes, barrels, bread, leather, horseshoes, wooden spoons, thread, knives, clothing, beer, carriages, hats, guns, and everything else needed for daily life.[5] Artisans prided themselves on their skill, and guarded it closely, teaching what they knew to the next generation through the apprentice system, an educational arrangement that had its origins in medieval Europe.[6]

In the Middle Ages, European craftsmen formed organizations called "guilds" to enforce standards of workmanship and control entry into the craft. There were no guilds in America,[7] but nevertheless, the skills of a craftsman, or artisan, were passed on from a master to his apprentice in an arrangement protected by a contract between the two.

The Apprenticeship System

In the English contract or "indenture" of apprenticeship, the master promised to teach the "art and mystery" of a craft and the apprentice promised to keep what he learned a secret.

In Britain, the apprenticeship system provided the master craftsman with a servant and helper; in return, he was responsible for the conduct and support of the apprentice. After serving with the master for a specified period of years—usually seven or until the age of twenty-one to twenty-four, the European apprentice was declared to be a "journeyman." He was then able to work for wages and save money. Eventually, he would apply to the guild for membership as a master craftsman. If his work was acceptable and he was able to pay the master's fee to the guild, he would be allowed to open his own shop and take on apprentices as a master.[8]

Apprenticeship in America

In the colonies, apprenticeship was a much less formal arrangement. There were no guilds in America, and contracts between a master and an apprentice were not always registered with the

town clerk or enforced when they were broken. This was not peculiar to the colonies, however.[9]

For example, in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, many apprentices never finished their apprenticeships and many journeymen never became masters. Reasons for this ranged widely. A master might die, or the apprentice might run away.[10] The most significant reason, however, was a change in the nature of production, as the Industrial Revolution subdivided portions of the handcraft process or replaced them with machinery, changing both the apprentice system and production.[11]

Labor and Education

Apprenticeship in colonial America can be viewed both as a child labor system and as an educational system. During the years of their apprenticeship, children learned each step in the process of making an item. At first they did only small chores for the master which required very little skill, and the majority of their time was taken up with running errands and cleaning the shop, duties they often shared with slaves and indentured servants. Gradually, the apprentice learned each step in the manufacturing process until at last he could make an entire wig, piece of cloth, barrel, iron gate, or pair of shoes on his own. Then he could become a "journeyman." Unlike the apprentice, who received room and board but no money, a journeyman worked for wages and hoped to one day be his own master.

Legal Obligations and Regulations

Although New York had no guilds, the laws of cities attempted to regulate the supply of labor in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and control the age at which a young person could work on his own. Until 1731, both Albany and New York City had laws requiring apprenticeships of at least seven years. Males had to serve until they were twenty-one and females until they were eighteen.[12]

Through the contract, the parents transferred their legal responsibility to maintain, educate, and protect their child to the master, who stood *in loco parentis*—in place of the parents under the law.[13]

The formal contract by which children were apprenticed was called an "indenture of apprenticeship." These contracts became standardized by the seventeenth century, when two parties merely filled in printed forms and swore to uphold the contract before the mayor, town recorder, or one of the aldermen.[14]

Contracts in New York

A contract signed in 1697 by Nathaniel Lynus, apprentice, and Nathaniel Marston, barber, is typical of contracts in colonial New York, although its language reflects the wording of English contracts of the sixteenth century.[15] The master promised the apprentice instruction and shelter:

> *. . . by the best means that he Can Shall teach or Cause to be taught and Instructed finding unto him meat Drinke, Apparell Lodging and washing fitting for a Apprentice During the Said Terme.*

The apprentice promised much more, including not to get married, sell anything that he made, or go anywhere without the permission of his master:

> * *Serve his Secretts, keep his Lawfull Commands, Glady Every where obey*
> * *he shall do no Damage to his Said Master Nor See it done by others without letting or Giving Notice thereof to his Said Master*
> * *he Shall not waste his Said Masters goods nor lend them Unlawfully to Any*
> * *he Shall not Committ Fornication Nor Contract Matrimony within the said Terme*
> * *Att Cards Dice or any other unlawful Game he shall not play wereby his Said Master may have Damage*
> * *with his own goods Nor the Goods of others During the Said Terme without Lycense from his Said Master he Shall Neigher buy nor Sell*
> * *he Shall not absent himselfe Day nor Night from his Masters Service without his Leave*
> * *Nor haunt Ale houses Taverns or Playhouses*
> * *but in all things as a faithful Apprentice he shall behave himself towards his Said Master and all During the Said term.*[16]

Some contracts had variations. For example, while it was customary for the apprentice to live with the master, the contract signed in 1723 by silversmith John Hastings of New York City allowed his apprentice to ". . . go and sleep at his

mother's house every night." In other contracts masters promised to "find" (provide) lodgings for the apprentice somewhere else if he had no room in his own house.[17]

Breach of Contract and Discipline

Masters could discipline their apprentices for breaking any of the rules. Colonial law in New York sanctioned whipping, scolding, and any other punishment as long as it did not permanently disfigure or maim the apprentice. If an apprentice was absent for more than twenty-four hours, his time of service would be doubled.[18] Apprentices could take the master to court if they were not being treated well or taught properly, and there is evidence that this happened frequently. Some masters were cruel, others had only a scant knowledge of their craft. A few, such as clockmaker Benjamin Cheney of Connecticut, refused to teach their apprentices and used them like slaves or servants.[19] John Fitch, Cheney's apprentice, was eventually released from his contract, as was Sarah Cotteril, a young apprentice in New York whom the courts ruled was "ill-used" and "in danger of her life" from the husband of her mistress, Elizabeth Irwin.[20]

Some masters were incompetent. As a young runaway apprentice, Ben Franklin took a job with two printers in Philadelphia whom he found to be scarcely able to operate their shop. One was nearly illiterate and the other, while he knew how to set type, did not know how to run the press.[21]

Apprentices, too, gave masters their share of problems, as the rules set forth in the contract above illustrate. Most children were formally apprenticed when they were twelve or thirteen, when adolescent conflicts with parents were at their height. Apprenticeship offered a happy solution to these conflicts, which were just as common in the colonial period as they are today, as the "stubborn child" law of the Puritans attests. Although common law sanctioned the death penalty for "stubborn children," in Puritan households, in fact it was never used, and most families experiencing difficulties with their children turned to apprenticeship as a solution.[22]

Another problem with apprentices was that they frequently ran away, often to set up shop on their own. The shortage of skilled craftsmen in the colonies coupled with the absence of guilds made it easy for runaway apprentices and half-trained men to start a business. It was part of the new freedom of the colonies.[23]

Choosing a Craft

The character of the master might influence a child's choice of a craft, but more often the determining factors were the family's economic situation, their acquaintances, and the gender of the child.

Artisan Households and the Economy

Most artisans in the colonies were the "middling sort"—not poor, but not rich either. However, the income of a family could fluctuate from seasonal variations and periodic depressions, thus affecting the choices open to the children. Work such as brickmaking and carpentry was seasonal. The colonial economy itself was volatile as well, especially in the seaport cities, influenced by the outbreak and end of various wars.

Some craftsmen earned very little. These included men just starting out, members of trades with a surplus of artisans, those who were too ill to work, and those who failed to attract well-paying customers. Shoemakers, tailors, and carpenters were sometimes in this group, as well as the widows of craftsmen and sailors. They were the bottom third of society in seaport cities such as Boston, Philadelphia, and New York.[24]

In lean times, the labor of their own children was important to these artisan households, so children would not be apprenticed to another family because their work was essential to the survival of their own.[25] Ben Franklin's father, for example, had several reversals of fortune and for a time, ten-year-old Ben ran errands and tended his father's soap and candle shop as well as doing production work such as cutting the wick for candles.[26]

The children of artisans also did odd jobs to earn money. If the family found it could not support all the children, the parents sometimes bound their children out as apprentices or as indentured servants at very young ages. The Reverend Robert Jenny, minister of the parish of Hempstead on Long Island, agreed to take as an apprentice Samuel, the three-year-old son of Philip Legross.[27]

Apprenticeship and the Children of the Poor

Sometimes the overseers of the poor (usually the Church Wardens) stepped in and made the arrangement for apprenticeship for poor families and

for orphaned children. In 1719, Susannah Maria Beyer, a nine-year-old orphan, was apprenticed by the Church Wardens of New York City to Obadiah Hunt and his wife Susannah. The Hunts were to keep the child for nine years, ". . . the Master & Mistress to Maintain with Apparell Meat Drink washing & Lodging & teach her Housewifery."[28] Orphans had no one to keep watch over the master as parents did. Many parents took masters to court to force them to honor sections of the contract with respect to the quality of food and instruction and to prevent brutality.[29]

Gender and Education

Parents were required by custom and by the common law of their colony to provide for the support and education of their children.[30] Apprenticeship contracts often included some kind of schooling, from "one quarter of a year's schooling," to "Six winters in the Night School that is to Say three months in Every winter upon the Charge of his Master."[31] "Schooling" meant instruction in reading and writing for boys; girls were taught reading only.[32] Frances Champion was indented to Anthony and Elizabeth Farmer and his wife as a servant and apprentice for nine years in 1698; the contract promised that she would be taught to ". . . Reade and . . . Spinning, Sewing, Knitting or any other manner of house-wifery."[33]

Gender and Apprenticeship

The gender of a child determined occupation in the colonial era. Most of the crafts did not take female apprentices and there were a few exclusively female crafts: seamstress, mantua maker (dressmaker), and milliner (women's hats). But most contracts of apprenticeship for female children were for "house-wifery" a much wider range of activities than a male apprentice, who would be taught the secrets of one trade only.[34] Some eighteenth century contracts in New York City promised a young woman lodging for a year following her period of service so that she could learn needlework (sewing) or some related trade.[35]

Supply and Demand

In the seventeenth century, the number of craftsmen who took on apprentices was limited, in part because the population was small and in part because the colonies imported most of their manufactured goods from England. But as the population grew, so did the demand for locally produced products.[36]

Colonial artisans prospered largely because their products were less expensive—imported goods carried a markup of from 100 to 300 percent[37]—and artisans came to make up 30 percent of the population in colonial cities in the 1750s.[38]

Parents tended to apprentice their children to artisans who were known to them.[39] Colonial craftsmen produced their goods for the local market, and goods were made-to-order (bespoke) for customers who were part of the artisan's community.[40]

But New York was also a colony with a heavy import and export trade and a growing population, and crafts developed to serve the needs of the burgeoning shipping business, as well as those of the growing population. Among the urban crafts that grew most quickly were shipbuilding, carpentry and other building trades, shoemaking, cabinet making, and coopering (barrelmaking).[41]

Artisans from England and Europe arrived to fill the demand, despite the efforts of the English government to restrict the emigration of craftsmen. England did not want manufacturing to take place in the colonies; they were to remain agricultural, export raw materials and import manufactured goods. Therefore, artisans were discouraged from emigrating.[42]

The English Board of Trade sought to curtail the manufacture of colonial goods; eventually Parliament made it a crime to help artisans leave England after 1700. Ship captains were threatened with a fine and 12 months in prison for each artisan "enticed" to emigrate. At first only workers in woolen textiles were targeted; then in 1765, Parliament placed restrictions on immigration for workers in several sectors of the textile industry to keep both trade secrets and skilled workers.[43]

The towns in the colonies were able to circumvent these restrictions by directly recruiting artisans, who came in droves hoping for higher wages and homesteads: cabinetmakers from London, tar burners from Finland, weavers from London, iron workers from Sheffield, linen printers and dyers from Dublin, and all varieties of artisans from Germany. Some local governments offered immigrant artisans tax exemption.[44]

These were the artisans who trained apprentices in their crafts. The earliest recorded contracts of apprenticeship show that in New York City between 1695 and 1727, 310 boys were apprenticed in thirty-nine trades. The largest group were appren-

ticed to cordwainers (shoemakers); other leading crafts included mariners, coopers, joiners (furniture makers), and shipwrights.

Not every artisan had an apprentice. In the early years of the eighteenth century, there were not enough children to go around, as many children died before they were five years old. Some craftsmen who were newly-arrived and had no local connections had to advertise for apprentices. The following ads appeared in the *New-York Mercury* in the eighteenth century:

- ** *Wanted, an a Apprentice to the Taylor's Trade, a Boy of Good character. Apply to William Thorne, at the Old Ship Market (1763).*
- ** *Wanted, an Apprentice for the Ironmongery Business (1770).*
- ** *Wanted, a lad of about 14 or 15 years of age, as an Apprentice to a Chymist and Druggist (1773).*[45]

Some artisans did not take apprentices but taught their trade to their sons. Others may have been to poor to take on the support of an apprentice.

The Craft Hierarchy

Even though artisans could expect to prosper in the colonies, they did not all enjoy the same standard of living. The success of a craftsman was determined by a number of factors, including his age, luck, skill, business sense, choice of a mate, health, and his place in the craft hierarchy as an apprentice, journeyman, or master.[46]

Colonial American society had a definite hierarchy. Apprentices were on the same social level as slaves and servants. The crafts as a whole were in the middle of society, between the very poor (hired servants, unskilled laborers) and the elite (wealthy merchants); but within the crafts there was also a hierarchy, determined by the level of skill and the cost of raw materials of the craft.

Some crafts were open to any child; but others required that the parents pay fees. Fees kept children from families with less money out of the more elite trades. Ben Franklin's father wanted to apprentice him to a cutler (knifemaker), but the fee was too high. In England, there were property qualifications for parents wishing to have a child apprenticed to some select trades, including merchants, mercers, drapers, goldsmiths, ironmongers, embroiderers, clothiers, and craftweavers.[47] These property qualifications did not apply in the colonies, but there was a hierarchy of trades.

At the top were crafts with expensive raw materials, such as silversmiths and goldsmiths. Also considered prestigious were crafts which demanded an unusual amount of specialized skill, such as printing, which required an apprentice with an aptitude for reading; or blacksmithing, which required great strength.

Some artisans, such as tailors, needed only a few tools. Others, such as shoemakers, cabinetmakers, and bookbinders, for example, needed more elaborate tools.[48]

Expectations

At the end of the apprenticeship, masters were typically required to give the apprentice a set of tools and two sets of clothing, one for everyday wear and one for Sunday, to complete their training and send them on their way to independence.[49]

Some enslaved children were trained to become craftsmen. But slave craftsmen could not operate as independent artisans. Their labor and the products they made belonged to the master, who used them for his needs or sold them and kept the profits for himself.[50]

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, children did not expect to rise on the social scale above the level of their parents. They and their parents hoped to set a course for their future that would enable them to live comfortably lives but not to move outside their station.[51]

Conclusion

The apprenticeship system in the colonies began to develop as a very different institution from that of England or Europe. Historians point to four main reasons for this difference:

First, because the craftsmen in the colonies needed to diversify their skills to make a livelihood, the guild systems never developed and there was less control over both apprenticeship practices and the quality of workmanship.

Second, while contracts of apprenticeship were supposed to be registered with local government authorities, this requirement was not enforced. The contracts were legally binding, but difficult to enforce without the active scrutiny of the guilds and the law.

Third, it was easy for an apprentice to run away to another colony before the seven-year term ended. There were authorities who were on the

lookout for runaways, but it was possible to elude them.

Finally, and most important, handcraft production began to change as the Industrial Revolution began to touch the colonies in the late eighteenth century (chapter 4). Mechanical process began to take the place of individual skill, water power replaced human muscle, and the manufacturing processes were broken into smaller segments (chapters 5 and 6). This process paved the way for the large-scale employment of children in some industries in the nineteenth century (chapter 7).[52]

Endnotes

1. *Burghers of New Amsterdam and Freemen of New York, 1675-1866* (New York Historical Society Collections, 1885), 574-575 in Samuel McKee, Jr., *Labor in Colonial New York, 1664-1776* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935),70.

2. For an illustration of the tools used by barbers and wigmakers, see Peter F. Copeland, *Early American Trades Coloring Book* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc.,1980).

3. For apprenticeship in colonial urban society, see Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: The Northern Seaports and the Origins of the American Revolution*, abridged edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 6-14.

4. See Stephen Innes, ed., *Work and Labor in Early America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 20-47.

5. For a discussion of technological change and the Industrial Revolution, see David Landes, *The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present* (Cambridge, MA: At the University Press, 1969).

6. For craftsmen in colonial America, see Carl Bridenbaugh, *The Colonial Craftsman* (New York: New York University Press, 1950); Ian M. G. Quimby, *The Craftsman in Colonial America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984); W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Craft Apprentice: From Franklin to the Machine Age in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

7. Rorabaugh, *The Craft Apprentice*, 4.

8. See *Hands of Honor: Artisans and their World in Dijon, 1550-1650* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989); Steve Rappaport, "Reconsidering Apprenticeship in Sixteenth-Century London," in John Monfasani and Ronald G. Musto, *Renaissance Society and Culture* (New York: Italica Press, 1991).

9. Rorabaugh, *The Craft Apprentice*, 4.

10. Rappaport, "Reconsidering Apprenticeship."

11. See chapter 4.

12. McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 72.

13. Blackmar, *Manhattan for Rent*, 55.

14. McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 72.

15. Steve Rappaport, *Worlds within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth Century London* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 232-238.

16. McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 69.

17. Blackmar, *Manhattan for Rent*, 58.

18. *Colonial Laws of New York*, I, 26, 36; IV, 924-925, in McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 75.

19. Colonial inventor John Fitch was apprenticed to Cheney and wrote about his cruel master in his diary. See Joseph and Frances Geis, *The Ingenious Yankees* (New York: Thomas Crowell and Company, 1976), 26-36.

20. Mins. Gen. Sess., Nov. 10, 1775, in McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 75.

21. Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin & Selections from His Writings* (New York: Random House, 1944), 32-33.

22. See John R. Sutton, "Stubborn Children: Law and the Socialization of Deviance in the Puritan Colonies," *Family Law Quarterly*, 15 (1981), 31-64.

23. Rorabaugh, *The Craft Apprentice*, 4.

24. Nash, *Urban Crucible*, 10.

25. Constance B. Schultz, "Children and Childhood in the Eighteenth Century," in Joseph M. Hawes and N. Ray Hiner, eds., *American Childhood: A Research Guide and Historical Handbook* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 70, 79-80.

26. Franklin, *Autobiography*, 11-12.

27. North and South Hempstead Town Records, C, 241-242, in McKee,*Labor in Colonial New York*, 87.

28. Robert Francis Seybolt, *Apprenticeship & Apprenticeship Education in Colonial New England and New York* (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 68.

29. McKee, *Labor in Colonial America*, Chapter II.

30. Blackmar, *Manhattan for Rent*, 55.

31. *Burghers and Freemen*, 590-591, in McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 74.

32. Schultz, "Children and Childhood," in Hawes and Hiner, eds., *American Children*, 70.

33. *Burghers and Freemen*, 578, in McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 74.

34. McKee, *Labor in Colonial New York*, 74-75.

35. Blackmar, *Manhattan for Rent*, 58.

36. Alan Dawley, *Class and Community: The Industrial Revolution in Lynn* (Cambridge: Harvard

University Press, 1976), 20-23; Sung Bok Kim, *Landlord and Tenant in Colonial New York: Manorial Society, 1664-1775* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press), 129-161.

37. Bridenbaugh, *The Colonial Craftsman*, 36.

38. Nash, *Urban Crucible*, 11.

39. Ibid., 7.

40. Ibid., 2.

41. See Bridenbaugh, *The Colonial Craftsman* and Howard B. Rock, *The New York City Artisan, 1789-1825* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press).

42. Richard B. Morris, *Government and Labor in Early America*, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1946), 22-35.

43. Ibid., 22.

44. Ibid., 24-35.

45. McKee, *Labor in Colonial America*, 86.

46. Nash, *The Urban Crucible*, 8.

47. Morris, *Government and Labor*, 22.

48. Rorabaugh, *The Craft Apprentice*, 6.

49. McKee, *Labor in Colonial America*, Chapter II.

50. See James E. Newton and Ronald L. Lewis, *The Other Slaves: Mechanics, Artisans, and Craftsmen* (Boston, MA: G.K. Hall & Co., 1978).

51. Nash, *The Urban Crucible*, 10.

52. Rorabaugh, *The Craft Apprentice*, 4.

Teaching Strategies for Chapter 3

Background

A form of "bound" labor, apprenticeship provided colonial America with a trained workforce capable of earning a living. Master and apprentice were bound by the terms of a contract signed by the master and a child's parents.

Activity

Students will evaluate the terms of an apprenticeship agreement. They will compare and contrast the three forms of bound labor and draw conclusions concerning the lives of children.

Directions

1. Provide students with information from Janet Greene's essay on apprenticeship.

Focus discussion on

- the importance of apprenticeship in colonial society
- the differences in the levels of expertise of an apprentice, journeyman, and master
- how the Industrial Revolution affected the apprenticeship system in America
- discipline/punishment for breaking a contract or for misbehaving
- the social rank of the apprentice
- the reasons why parents might want their children to become apprentices
- qualities an apprentice would need
- comparison of apprenticeships in America and England.

2. Have students read the accompanying excerpts from actual apprenticeship agreements found in the essay. Explain that rules of spelling and grammar are more standardized today. Also explain that an agreement is an exchange of promises or obligations.

In small groups discuss the following questions found at the bottom of the student worksheet:

- Why do you think words were spelled this way?
- What did the master promise the apprentice?
- What did the apprentice promise the master?
- Was this exchange fair?

3. Have students compare and contrast the situations of children as indentured servants, slaves, and apprentices. This can be accomplished by a chart, writing assignment, drawings, skits, etc. Categories can include quality of life, social rank, rights, responsibilities, discipline, and what the future holds for each child. Have students draw conclusions based on the information and then evaluate the child's future prospects under each form of bound labor.

Enrichment Activities

• Invite a speaker to explain to students the present apprenticeship systems available. Call a local affiliate of the New York State Building and Construction Trades Council for the names of available speakers in your area. Locals should also have information concerning speakers from the Skilled Worker Emeritus System.

Vocabulary

apprenticeship
vocational training
artisan
craftsman
guild
journeyman
master craftsman
in loco parentis
breach of contract
illiterate
textiles
craft hierarchy

The Apprenticeship

Read the following excerpts from actual apprenticeship agreements in colonial New York and answer the questions below:

I. The master promised:

> . . . by the best means that he Can Shall teach or
> Cause to be taught and Instructed finding unto him
> meat Drinke, Apparell Lodging and washing fitting for
> a Apprentice During the Said Terms.

II. The apprentice promised:

- Serve his Secretts, keep his Lawfull Commands, Gladly Every where obey
- he shall do no Damage to his Said Master Nor See it done by others without letting or Giving Notice thereof to his Said Master
- he Shall not waste his Said Masters goods no lend them Unlawfully to Any
- he Shall not Comitt Fornication Nor Contract Matrimony Within the Said Terms
- Att Cards Dice or any other unlawful Game he shall not play wereby his Said Master may have Damage
- with his own goods Nor the Goods of others During the Said Terms without Lycense from his Said Master he Shall Neigher buy nor Sell
- he Shall not absent himselfe Day nor Night from his Masters Service without his Leave
- Nor haunt Ale houses Taverns or Playhouses
- but in all things as a faithful Apprentice he shall behave himselfe towards his Said Master and all During the Said term

Answer the following questions:

1. Why do you think the words were spelled this way?
2. What did the master promise the apprentice?
3. What did the apprentice promise the master?
4. Was this exchange fair? Why?

Chapter 4: Household Production in the Eighteenth Century

The work experiences of children in the eighteenth century were shaped by the location and type of household in which they lived, whether they were indentured servants, slaves, apprentices, or family members. Children who lived on the Lefferts family farm in Flatbush, or worked in the New York City workshop of saddler John Smart, or labored alongside their parents as tenant farmers on the Livingston Manor in the Lower Hudson Valley, shared conditions of economic and social dependence.

Even if a child did not live with his or her parents, most of the work that children performed was in the household. The household was more than just a family dwelling—it was a workshop. Households produced goods for the family and for sale or exchange with other households or a larger market.[1]

This chapter will focus on the resources a family needed to support itself in eighteenth century New York. Children were one important family resource, along with land, skills, and tools to make apparel, food, drink, and other necessities of life.[2] This chapter will illustrate how children's working lives in households were shaped by the family's access to these resources, as well as changes in the economy in eighteenth-century New York.

The Yeoman Ideal

Rural and urban households of the "middling sort"—that is, neither very poor or very rich—had several features in common. First, the ideal household itself was an economic unit. Together, the family members with their skills and tools made use of the buildings, land, and domestic animals to produce food and household items for their own use and for exchange or sale.[3]

Second, in the middle colonies in the eighteenth century, eighty-five percent of the population was involved in agriculture. For New York, agriculture continued to be the most common occupation of families well into the nineteenth century.[4] Even in cities, a small amount of land gave artisans a competitive edge. Land could supply the family with vegetables and could support a few domestic animals.

Third, each family in both the city and the countryside, hoped for economic independence—the "yeoman ideal" in which no one would have to work for wages or in the household of another.

This ideal was not always a reality, however. As the population of the colonies rose in the eighteenth century, some groups found it difficult to achieve this ideal of an independent household. It was these groups whose children were most often found working outside their own homes.

Newly arrived immigrants, freed indentured servants, widows, and orphans lacked the capital to purchase or rent land and the cow or pig that most families required for subsistence. Artisans in the port cities of Boston, Philadelphia, and New York saw their fortunes rise and fall with the political climate. Historians Gary Nash and Billie Smith have noted the rise in urban colonial poverty. During the Seven Years' War, for example, the fortunes of craftsmen associated with shipbuilding—the largest industry in New York—soared. But the war's end brought unemployment and depressed wages. In the 1760s and 1770s some craftsmen found themselves unable to afford apprentices or live-in journeymen. These former apprentices and journeymen had to purchase their own food and lodging. They often lived as boarders with other poor families, and were forced to find food and lodging for themselves, or, if they were married, took in boarders themselves. Men without specific skills worked as day laborers in the cities—and their families scratched out a living as best they could.[5]

Children could be both a drain and a resource for families, and for the poor, as a last resort, children could be sent out to beg in the streets. In both the city and the country, families whose resources failed to meet their needs bound the children out as servants, as the following story will illustrate.

In 1786, a man who signed himself "Honest Farmer" wrote that he had been sent to live and

work in a household not his own when he was a child. He described his efforts to provide for his own children:

> *My parents were poor, and they put me at twelve years of age to a farmer, with whom I lived till I was twenty-one. I married me a wife—and a very working young woman she was—and we took a farm of forty acres on rent. In ten years I was able to buy me a farm of sixty aces, an soon added another sixty acres. I bought several lots of out land for my children, which amounted to seven when I was forty-five years old.*[6]

Children were an asset to families, but only if the family had enough of the other resources such as land, tools, and skills, could the children's work make the household more prosperous.

Labor

Work in the eighteenth-century household was most commonly divided by age and gender. The wife along with the female children and female servants did most of their work for the household. A large portion of this work was childcare. Families had as many as ten or fourteen children, and by the end of the eighteenth century, many of these children lived to adulthood.

As the children grew up, female children were enlisted to take care of the younger ones, as well as do the work of the household. Even wealthy families made their aprons and other linens at home, and families of modest means made their own clothing. Female children were expected to learn to knit caps, stockings, and scarves. Children as young as six or seven began sewing by hemming handkerchiefs, pillowcases, and sheets.

Males were more likely to be engaged in activities that were directed toward the marketplace as well as the home. In John Smart's saddle shop in New York City, for instance, the master and his male apprentices or journeymen made saddles, harnesses, and trunks for sale.[7] In the countryside, farmers bartered or sold their grain to the gristmill and their produce to the market to feed the families of city dwellers.

Females had a separate economy involving barter and exchange of services instead of cash. Women traded both goods and services: homespun yarn and thread, eggs, herbs, cheese, sewing, or midwife services.[8]

In the pre-industrial household system of production, each member of the household was dependent on the work of the others. For example, male indentured servants and male apprentices were not paid with money, but they lived in the house of their master, where the women and girls of the household fed them and washed their clothes. The women and girls were not paid for their work, but the earnings of the household went to support them as well.

Legally, everything belonged to the head of the household, the father. Historian Elizabeth Blackmar perceptively notes that within the household, even though there was no exchange of money, there was an exchange of labor: the work of the females (meals, mending, washing, among other things) was part of the payment to the males who lived and worked for the master.[9]

Land

The type and quality of the land available to a family was very important to its prosperity. Even non-farming households used the land to raise a vegetable garden or keep a cow or pig for the family supply of meat, milk, butter, and cheese.

Land was difficult to obtain in colonial New York after 1736. A few rich and powerful men had gained control over the best land in the seventeenth century; land north and west of Albany was unavailable for settlement by Europeans until after Queen Anne's War.[10] New regulations passed in 1736 required that land must be surveyed before it could be purchased. Few families could afford the expenses of a surveyor, lawyers, and the necessary travel this procedure required. Consequently, it was speculators and the very wealthy who purchased large tracts and drove prices up or rented the land.[11]

There were other reasons that children in many families did not expect to have land of their own someday. Children who were indentured servants, slaves, and females did not expect to become "freemen," that is, to work for themselves. Children who completed their indentures would not have cash to buy land. Similarly, the laws of New York prohibited former slaves from owning land in the early nineteenth century.

Inheritance practices gave land to only one child in a family; others divided the family land equally, but often these parcels were too small to support a family. Some families left the land to the eldest son after the father's death (primogeniture or entail); others (stem families) chose one child to

live and work the farm with them while the father was still living. In either case, the other children had to find their own way, either by moving to another part of the country, by moving to town, or perhaps by renting land.[12] As early as 1708, the governor of Long Island complained that children had to move away from the island when they grew old enough to start their families. One reason was a scarcity of land; another was that townships such as Southhampton and Easthampton insisted on a minimum number of acres per family in order to keep out poor families who would become a drain on the local treasury.[13] Many families, unable to meet property requirements in King's County (now Brooklyn) or Long Island, became tenants on Hudson River manors.[14]

New York's manorial tenant system, in which the first generation of Hudson Valley children were reared, was unique in the colonies. It was a remnant of the Dutch West India Company, which had created huge estates along the fertile east bank of the Hudson River from Manhattan to Albany. The manors persisted in the early decades of English settlement, but attracted few tenants because most people wanted to own land, not rent it as they had in Europe. However, as time went by, rising land prices and the pressures of population on land that was available for purchase led more people to become tenants. The number of tenants on the Manor of Renssaelaerwyck, a tract of hundreds of thousands of acres surrounding the city of Albany, grew from only 82 tenants in 1714, to 345 in 1752 and 1,000 in 1779.[15]

Families who arrived in America with some capital or could manage to save money were able to purchase land, but buying land was much more difficult for those who arrived with very little money after 1750, such as the Germans and Scotch-Irish.[16] Many of these people also became tenants on the Hudson River manor where their primary work was not as farmers, but as hired laborers in the iron industry, sawmills or gristmills.[17] Others worked at some kind of craft. Among the tenant families on Livingston Manor in 1783 were Timothy Loomis, a collier at the Ancram iron foundry; William Trafford, a hammersmith; Christopher George, a day laborer; and Lawrence Quackenbush, an artisan.[18] Historians have not yet studied the apprenticeship patterns of children on these manors, but the work of the women and children served to keep families fed and clothed, just as it did in urban households.

Profit from the labor of tenant farmers went to the land owners. Men like Robert Livingston, owner of Livingston Manor, derived considerable wealth from the tenants—including child labor—on his land. Tenant farmers paid their rent in wheat and in workdays without wages in his ironworks and sawmills, where they carted firewood, timber, stones, wood, and iron ore to and from the forges, and cut and split timber at the sawmills.[19] After the Revolutionary War, conditions of obtaining land in New York were altered by new Indian treaties and land grants to veterans, but by the early nineteenth century, activities of speculators and vague land titles continued to hinder many new immigrants who sought to purchase land.[20]

Skills

Eighteenth-century households valued the labor of their children, especially as they grew older and learned skills that enabled them to help with the work. Like the unpaid labor of wives, work performed by the children in a family could add substantially to the subsistence level of the household and even help the family accumulate property by selling any surplus products or by producing goods for the market.[21]

The children learned the skills practiced in their households.[22] If children lived in a household where textile processing was done, they learned to process fibers for yarn and cloth. Children in rural areas helped clean the wool or flax and carded or combed them for spinning. Many children were taught to spin as well as sew and bake as part of their domestic apprenticeship.

Other children lived in craftsmen's houses. Even farm work included craft work in many cases. For instance, some farm households specialized in making barrels, nails, or dairy products. Other households specialized in processing agricultural and forest products. Some of these families owned or worked as hired hands at sawmills, gristmills, or fulling mills, and their children, typically the male ones, helped out with the work. [23] In all these settings, children learned the trade of the household.

Markets

The yeoman ideal to the contrary, it would be a mistake to think of eighteenth-century households as self-sufficient.[24] Households were interdependent. The rural home was a place in which fami-

lies—parents and children—produced food and household items for their own use and for exchange or sale.[25] Many households produced a surplus, which they sold or bartered with other households or with local merchants for manufactured goods.

Only in very remote areas did families have to be self-sufficient, and then only until settlements developed enough to support trading networks. Networks included not only other households but local merchants and distant markets as well. An indication of the variety of this household production in rural areas can be gleaned from the inventory of merchant Samuel Townsend of Oyster Bay, Long Island. Townsend traded with local farmers and shipped their produce to New York City. In 1746, he loaded a ship from his warehouse with 226 hams, 3 hogsheads of lard, 49 pounds of pewter, 100 pounds of beeswax, 9 firkins of butter, and 90 double casks of pickled tongues produced on Long Island farms.[26]

Households bought or bartered many items. Townsend's country store stocked textiles, crockery, glassware and metal goods from Europe and salt, molasses, rum and sugar from the West Indies. He also carried manufactured goods which were both imported and manufactured locally, including barrels, staves, hoops, shingles, gloves, scythes, snuff, tea, hinges, spelling books, chocolate, nutmegs, buttons, pipes, molasses, bearskins, and imported fabrics.[27] Only a small percentage of farm produce in the colonial period went to the international market. Most was produced for local and urban markets, which were constantly expanding.[28]

New York City's population tripled between 1723 and 1771, growing from just over 7,000 people to more than 21,000. By 1790 it was more than 30,000 and in 1800 it had doubled again to 60,489.[29] The market for all kinds of foodstuffs increased along with the population, and merchants encouraged farmers in the surrounding countryside to sell their surpluses to the urban market.

Transportation difficulties kept many rural households from selling for the market. Roads were poor and the Hudson froze every winter. Long Island was an especially important source of food for New York City for this reason; food arrived by boat.

Patriotic Homespun

Home manufacturing in the colonies, whether of foodstuffs or other goods, was confined to local markets until the middle of the eighteenth century. After 1760, however, some colonists began to advocate home textile manufacturing as a symbol of protest against British trade policies. Patriots encouraged households to produce more homespun cloth as a sign of loyalty to the cause.[30]

Under the British Woolens Act of 1699, colonists were not allowed to produce wool, yarn, or woolen cloth for export, but were encouraged to buy British imported cloth.[31] Cloth was not a major product of colonial households even though women spun thread for a variety of domestic needs, including shoelaces and knitted items.[32] Families purchased imported cloth. Merchant Samuel Townsend of Oyster Bay on Long Island sold thousands of yards of imported cloth each year. The cloth came from England, India, Germany, and Holland in shades of blue, green, yellow, and scarlet.[33]

The British governor of New York, however, was convinced that children in every household could card and spin. In a report to the British board of trade in 1767, he wrote:

> *The custom of making Coarse Cloths in private families prevails throughout the entire province . . . and almost in every House a sufficient quantity is manufactured for the use of the family . . . . Every house swarms with children who are set to work as soon as they are able to Spin and Card; and as every family is furnished with a loom, the itinerant weavers who travel about the country put the finishing hand to the work.*[34]

Regardless of the governor's views, urban families did not produce textiles, and neither did many rural ones. Children in urban families did not routinely learn how to spin, and neither did rural children in families with no access to wool, flax, or land on which to grow them.

The lack of skills in textile manufacture among some members of the population was clearly demonstrated in 1765, when a group of New York City entrepreneurs hired about three hundred impoverished men, women, and children to work in a linen manufactory. Assembled in a central location which was filled with spinning wheels and looms, many of the people, in fact, had to be taught

to weave and spin. Still others resisted not being allowed to do the work in their own homes, as they were accustomed.[35] As a result, the manufactory failed; the cloth was produced too slowly to be profitable, and it was soon abandoned.

Homespun garments, however, continued to become a badge of protest against British colonial policies. In 1774, Charity Clarke, a New York City teenager, vowed to learn to spin in order to fight the British. She wrote:

> *Heroines may not distinguish themselves at the head of an Army, [but women can be] a fighting army of amazones . . . armed with spinning wheels. [Men]. . . shall all learn to weave, & keep sheep . . . beyond the reach of arbitrary power, cloathed with the work of our own hands & feeding on what the country affords.*[36]

Cloth making ventures in small factories did occur in the eighteenth century, but primarily on southern plantations. Thomas Jefferson was one of many southern planters who set up such small factories on their plantations. They bought spinning wheels and looms and brought slave women and children in from the fields to teach them how to produce cloth. After 1765, Jefferson assigned all of his female slaves between the ages of ten and sixteen to spinning. Male slave children of the same ages were taught to make nails.[37]

War Changes Work

During the Revolutionary War, clothmaking at home which employed children became as much a necessity as a patriotic duty, as this letter from Captain Edward Rogers of Connecticut to his wife after the Battle of Long Island illustrates:

> *[I have lost] all the shirts except the one on my back & all the stockings except thos on my legs. . . . The making of cloth must go on. . . . I must have shirts and stockings & a jacket sent me as soon as possible & a blankit.*[38]

Wartime added new products to household production: ammunition and food for the battlefield, as Yale president Ezra Stiles noted during his travels through Boston in 1774:

> *[A]t every house [I saw] women and children making cartridges, running Bullets, making Wallets, baking Biscuit, crying and bemoaning & at the same time animating their Husbands and Sons to fight for their Liberties, tho' not knowing whether they should ever see them again.*[39]

But if the war could increase household production, it could also destroy it. Some families had to abandon their households during the war. When British troops occupied New York City in 1776, William Allen, a gunmaker, and John Simnet, a watchmaker, were among the many craftsmen who fled the city, taking jobs for child apprentices with them. Simnet went as far as Albany, where he was out of work for eight years.[40] Many apprenticeships were dissolved during the war as masters and apprentices either fled or enlisted.

Other families merely relocated their household duties. Hundreds of women and their children joined their husbands, sons, and brothers on both sides of the battlefields; they fought, cooked for the troops, washed clothes, and tended the wounded.[41] Soldiers without families hired women and children to do their cooking and washing.[42]

War and Gender Roles

Just as the Revolutionary War temporarily changed traditional work relations, so too did it alter traditional gender roles in the household. Women and children, legally and practically subordinated to their husbands in the patriarchal colonial society, suddenly had to assume responsibility for running the business aspects of the farm or workshop while their husbands were away. Some women, and children too, viewed this as an emancipating aspect of the Revolution; others longed for the disruptions of war to end.

Lydia Mintern Post describes the turmoil in her life on Long Island in 1777 when Hessian troops were quartered on her farm after the British took New York City:

> *[The redcoats] take the fence rails to burn, so that the fields are all left open and the cattle stray away and are often lost; [the soldiers] burn fires all night on the ground, and to replenish them, go into the woods and cut down all the young saplings, thereby destroying the growth of ages. . . .*

The soldiers lived in Mrs. Post's kitchen, and despite their role as official enemies, they were kind to her children. However, when they got their monthly ration of rum, their singing, dancing, and fighting frightened her household.[43]

Postwar Changes: Cottage Industry

In the War's aftermath, many families had to learn new skills to adapt to their changing fortunes. There was a revolution in manufacturing during the Revolutionary War; it began in the countryside. Merchants helped organize rural artisans to make fabric, cheese, paper, gunpowder, tinware, and shoes for a wider market. Enterprising landowners built mills in the countryside along rivers and streams for a variety of water-powered operations including gristmills, lumber mills, cider presses, and later, textile machinery for the first factories (see chapter 5).

This system of rural household production was called "cottage industry." A household did not merely sell its surpluses; rather it produced goods specifically for the market, often because its landholdings were insufficient to support the family.[44] The work force in this system of household production always included children.

There were many varieties of cottage industry, but two extremes will be illustrated here.[45] In the first type, a family processed its own raw materials and sold the product on the market. For instance, in 1790, when Mary Palmer was fifteen, her family moved from Boston to Framingham in the Massachusetts countryside. A neighbor taught Mary's mother to make dairy products, something she had not learned as a female city dweller. Then the women and female children of the Palmer family began a "cottage industry" to help support the family. They began to manufacture cheese and butter for sale, and each female family member had a part in the production process. Mary's mother made the butter and cheese; Mary and her younger sisters were in charge of cleaning the utensils. They scrubbed the churns, pans, cheesehoops, and strainers after every operation.[46]

The second type of cottage industry is often called "outwork," which attracted families in both rural and urban households. (See chapters 5 and 6.) In outwork, a family was hired by a merchant who supplied the raw materials and collected the finished product. The product belonged to the merchant, not to the members of the family. They were paid wages for their work. All the family members, including children, might be involved in some way in production.

Products manufactured in the rural outwork system included buttons, palm-leaf straw hats, and parts of shoes. The raw materials for these items were not produced locally, and families who wanted to earn money had to go to a merchant to get the raw materials. Merchants often prospered from this kind of arrangement, sometimes supplying thousands with work. Families were expected to produce large quantities of buttons or hats, for example, and were generally paid by the piece.[47]

Children working in the outwork system did not learn skills that would lead them to become independent crafts people, but they did earn money for the household. Outwork did not offer extensive training for a craft, however, because children only learned to perform a specific task. In shoemaking, for instance, outworkers did not make an entire pair of shoes, but each part of the shoe was given to different households. The children in that household would only learn to sew the pre-cut tops of shoes, for instance. They would not learn to measure and cut leather, attach a sole or heel, or any of the other skills that would enable them to become shoemakers.

Conclusion

At the end of the eighteenth century, families who were attracted to the cottage industry system were often those who had few resources: not enough land; too many children; too few skills. In some cases this system gave them a chance to earn money in their own homes. But in the case of families whose children were outworkers, the money often replaced the child's chance to learn a better skill.

Endnotes

1. Richard B. Sheridan, "The Domestic Economy," in J.R. Pole and Jack P. Greene, eds. *Colonial British America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 73.

2. Sheridan, "The Domestic Economy," 64.

3. See James Henretta, "The War for Independence and American Economic Development," in Ronald Hoffman, et al., eds. *The Economy of Early America: The Revolutionary Period, 1763-1790* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1988), 46-87.

4. Yasuo Okada, "Squires Diary: New York Agriculture in Transition," *New York History* 52 (October 1971), 396.

5. Richard S. Dunn,"Servants and Slaves: The Recruitment and Employment of Labor," in Jack P. Greene and J.R. Pole, eds., *Colonial British America* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 182.

6. James Henretta, *America's History* (Chicago: The Dorsey Press, 1987), 90-91.

7. Elizabeth Blackmar, *Manhattan for Rent, 1785-1850* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 50-51.

8. For a close look at the household economy in late eighteenth century Maine, see Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990).

9. Blackmar, *Manhattan for Rent*, 58.

10. Sung Bok Kim, *Landlord and Tenant in Colonial New York* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 191.

11. Kim, *Landlord and Tenant in Colonial New York*, 134-137.

12. Henretta, *America's History*, 90-91.

13. Langdon Wright, "In Search of Peace and Harmony: New York Communities in the Seventeenth Century," *New York History* 61 (1980), 15.

14. Kim, *Landlord and Tenant in Colonial New York*, 239.

15. Henretta, *America's History*, 99.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Kim, *Landlord and Tenant in Colonial New York*, 276.

19. Kim, *Landlord and Tenant in Colonial New York*, 207; Cynthia Kierner, "Landlord and Tenant in Revolutionary New York: The Case of Livingston Manor," *New York History* 70 (April 1989), 147.

20. David Maldwyn Ellis, "Whitestown: From Yankee Outpost to Cradle of Reform," *New York History* 65 (January, 1984), 32-59.

21. Blackmar, *Manhattan for Rent*, 55.

22. Ulrich, *A Midwife's Diary*, 29.

23. Kim, *Landlord and Tenant in Colonial New York*, 204.

24. See Carole Shammas, *The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

25. See Henretta, "The War for Independence and American Economic Development," in Hoffman, et al., eds. *The Economy of Early America*, 45-87; Sheridan, "Domestic Economy," in Greene and Pole, eds., *Colonial British America*, 64-65.

26. Geoffrey L. Rossano, "To Market, To Market: Oyster Bay and the International Economy in the Mid-Eighteenth Century," in Joan P. Kreig, ed., *Long Island Studies: Evoking a Sense of Place* (Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1988), 66.

27. Sheridan, "Domestic Economy," 75.

28. Ibid., 43.

29. Kim, *Landlord and Tenant in Colonial New York*, 192; Blackmar, *Manhattan for Rent*, 45.

30. Sheridan, "Domestic Economy," 77.

31. For a discussion of how historians have interpreted British mercantilism over the past two hundred years, see "British Mercantilism, Help or Hindrance?" in Gerald Grob and George Billias, eds., *Interpretations of American History: Patterns and Perspectives*, Volume 1 (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 72-90.

32. Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company, 1980), 15-20.

33. Rossano, "To Market, To Market," 66, 70.

34. Henretta, "The War for Independence and American Economic Development," in Hoffman, ed., *The Economy of Early America*, 60.

35. Gary Nash, *The Urban Crucible: The Northern Seaports and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986),118-120; 160-161.

36. Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, 169.

37. Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, 30.

38. Henretta, "The War for Independence and Economic Development," 70.

39. Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, 157.

40. Rita Susswein Gottesman, *The Arts and Crafts in New York: 1777-1799* (New York: The New York Historical Society, 1954), v-xvi.

41. Linda K. Kerber, "'History Can Do It No Justice'; Women and the Reinterpretation of the American Revolution," in Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, *Women in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1989), 11-13.

42. Kerber, "Women and the Reinterpretation of the American Revolution," 13.

43. Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, 204-205.

44. Henretta, *America's History*, 262-263.

45. New York State has yet to have a full-scale history of rural industrial development in the years between 1780 and 1860, but scholars have begun to examine rural industry in New England. See, for example, Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: 1780-1860* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990) for a full discussion of the varieties of household production.

46. Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, 10.

47. Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism*, 179-191; and Alan Dawley, *Class and Community: The Industrial Revolution in Lynn* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976).

Teaching Strategies for Chapter 4

Background for Activity A

In New York in the 1700s, a child's labor was very important to the family. Using the information students have gathered they will create a mural depicting a child's contributions to an eighteenth-century family.

Activity A

Students will research a group of two or three tasks necessary for the success of eighteenth-century families in New York. They will then create a poster depicting these tasks and give an oral presentation to share their information with the others in the class.

Directions

1. Provide students with the background information from Janet Greene's essay on household production. Students need to understand that children were considered a valuable family resource because their labor was essential to meeting the family's needs.

2. Divide the class into seven groups of approximately equal size. Assign a group of two or three related tasks to each group.

3. Distribute "Household Production." Allow students to research their tasks using textbooks and other available resources. Some of the chart can be completed by using common sense.

4. Each group should prepare a poster depicting some aspect of each task and how children helped to complete the task. Each student should contribute to the poster.

5. Each group should give an oral presentation in which group members will share their expertise on each of their tasks. All group members should take part in the presentation. Provide the other students in the class with a blank copy of the Household Production Chart for the purpose of taking notes during other presentations.

Household Production Chart

Task	Why was this task necessary to the household?	What was necessary to complete the task? (Include process and tools needed.)	How would a child contribute?	Is this a task for boys, girls, or both?
candlemaking soapmaking				
tool making making furniture				
spinning thread tanning hides making clothes				
clearing the land gathering firewood				
tending the kitchen garden cultivating field crops				
caring for livestock milking & gathering eggs				
preparing food preserving food preparing herbal remedies				

Background for Activity B

In Activity A students examined the important role children played in household production in rural families in eighteenth-century New York. The Industrial Revolution and the spread of wage labor drastically altered the nature of the labor of children. Chapter 5 is dedicated to the mill and factory work of children. Prior to studying chapter 5, it would be helpful for students to reflect on differences between the labor of children in the eighteenth century and today.

Activity B

Students will write an essay comparing child labor in the eighteenth century and today.

Directions

1. Distribute student worksheet, "Child Workers—18th Century & Today."

2. Have students complete the worksheet individually, in pairs, or in groups. Students should understand that today child labor is regulated by state and national agencies. Before the age of eighteen, children can receive working papers and "officially" enter the workforce under limitations. Refer to the *Working Teenager* or New York State Department of Labor pamphlets for the most recent information on child labor laws. Depending on a student's personal situation, financial contributions to the family may or may not be necessary to support the family, therefore, answers for this will vary. (For an order form for the *Working Teenager*, contact the Council for Citizenship Education, Russell Sage College, Troy, New York 12180.)

Discuss with students that their answers for the eighteenth-century column must reflect the thinking of the times **not** their opinions of child workers of the eighteenth century.

3. Using the information from their charts have each student write an essay comparing child labor in the eighteenth century and today. Remind students that the essay should have an introduction and a conclusion.

Vocabulary

cottage industry
outwork
textiles
fulling mill
tenant farmer
land grants

Child Workers—18th Century & Today

Please complete the following chart. Once you have completed the chart, write an essay comparing child labor in the eighteenth century and today.

	Eighteenth Century	Today
Female chores in the household		
Male chores in the household		
Education		
Leisure		
Children as financial contributors to the household		
Attitudes about & laws on child workers		

Chapter 5: From Farm to Factory

In many ways, Emily Chubbuck typified the children who were the rural outworkers and the first factory workers in New York State. Poor, her family moved frequently from one rented farm to another. Her father had no tools for farming, and the rented land did not yield good crops. In 1828, when Emily was eleven, her parents sent her to work in a woolen mill in Oneida County. She worked in the factory intermittently for eighteen months, until the family moved again. Next she worked in the home of a weaver, winding thread, and later as a seamstress. Between her periods of work, she managed to attend school, but studying was difficult because she was so tired.[1]

Emily's story, which will be elaborated on below, illustrates several important aspects of the links between rural households and the developing factory system in the early nineteenth century. First, families saw the factory as one new option for adding to their income. Second, household production and outwork such as threadmaking and weaving co-existed with the growth of factories. Third, education for children was no longer a part of their work, but became something quite separate and difficult to obtain.

Factory work offered children and their families a new kind of work—tending machines in a location outside a household. However, it promised income for families who lacked resources for survival under more traditional circumstances (see chapter 4).

This chapter will trace the relationship between the growth of factories and the choices available to households in the early years of industrial development in New York State.

New Technology and Early Factories

Most manufacturing in eighteenth-century America was done by hand and was powered by human or animal strength. The most notable exceptions were gristmills, sawmills, and iron forges and furnaces which used waterpower. These were typically located on streams or rivers in the countryside, and settlements grew up around them.[2] Waterpower was also the first source of power for large scale manufacturing in America. Consequently, the first factory workers were not part of the urban workforce, but were drawn from the countryside.[3]

Mass production was something quite new in America. Before the factories, cloth, like other goods, was not produced until someone placed an order for it. Only then were the handspinners and weavers set to work in their cottages to make the desired kind and amount of cloth.[4] Increases in the number of orders came at the end of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, when war with England in the 1870s and the War of 1812 cut off supplies from abroad and stimulated the need for large-scale production. Factory production in America began with new technology in the textile industry in the 1790s. Its first factory was Samuel Slater's carding mill in Rhode Island.

Enterprising New Yorkers did not wish to be left behind in the experiments in factory production. In 1806, for example, a group of Oneida County businessmen formed a company to manufacture cotton textiles with machinery similar to the Arkwright spinning frame used by Slater in Rhode Island. The Oneida Manufacturing Company opened in 1809, followed by more than two dozen cotton and woolen factories in the next two decades.[5] Other early water-powered manufacturing enterprises for flax, grain, leather, and textiles developed along New York's rivers, including those at Rochester, Troy, Kingston, and Poughkeepsie.[6]

Factory Work and Household "Outwork"

Farm families were an essential component of the first manufacturing operations in both New England and New York, as raw materials and finished goods moved back and forth between the factory and surrounding farmhouses in various stages of production. For example, in 1810 factory workers at the Oneida Manufacturing Company opened bales of cotton and beat them with sticks to

loosen the seeds. Then the raw cotton was taken to farm families, who cleaned it. From the farmhouses, the cleaned cotton returned to the factory, where it was spun into yarn. From there, the finished yarn went back to the families of handloom weavers, who wove the thread into fabric. Farm families and factory workers alike worked for wages or were paid in kind, that is with cloth or other products. The finished cloth belonged to the factory owner.[7]

Children were part of both stages, in the farmhouses and in the factories. In the farmhouses they helped with cleaning and carding; children who lived or worked with weavers helped to throw the shuttles and wind thread for the bobbins.[8]

Emily Chubbuck was one such child. She worked for a time in the home of a Scots handloom weaver who also got work as a threadmaker in his home near Utica, New York. In 1830, when she was thirteen, Emily went to the weaver's home after school; during the summer months, she worked all day, standing alone in his house, turning a crank that twisted thread.[9]

New machinery, both hand powered and water-powered, continued to replace traditional household-based operations. Eighteenth-century inventors developed machinery which could do some of the skilled work formerly done by craftsmen and their apprentices or by women and children at home. When this machinery was employed in the production process, factory owners who had spent large sums on expensive machinery did not need the skills of the hand craftsmen. All the skill was now built into the machine. So the factory owners offered low wages, but adults resisted work at such prices.

As machines for carding, spinning, and eventually weaving grew more sophisticated, farm-based outwork became unnecessary. Factory owners began to recruit more workers for employment in the factory.

Some manufacturers tried to hire "apprentices," but when the boys saw their "apprenticeship" in the mills would be merely tending the machines, they ran away.[10] Unskilled young children, families, and young unmarried women became the factory workforce.

Children as Factory Workers

The first workers in a successful American factory were seven boys and two girls aged seven to twelve years. They were employed by Samuel Slater in his Pawtucket, Rhode Island, carding mill at its opening in 1790.[11] The children worked six days a week, twelve hours a day.[12]

Census records do not identify children in the labor force before 1870, but there is ample evidence they were a significant part of the workforce in the textile industry. Scholars estimate that by 1828, more than 200,000 children were at work in Rhode Island, Connecticut, and southern Massachusetts.[13]

Between 1809 and 1827, sixteen woolen and cotton mills opened in Oneida County, New York.[14] The workforce grew from 63 in the first factory (1809) to a total of 779 in 1827. Factory and census records do not always indicate how many of these workers were children, but in some cases they made up almost the entire workforce, as at the Oneida Manufacturing Company, where 59 boys and girls tended 1,000 spindles and 34 looms in 1828. This mill alone grew to more than 190 employees within the next four years. In 1832, more than 1,000 people worked in the Oneida County cotton and woolen industry.[15]

After the Erie Canal opened in 1825, factories sprang up along its 360 miles, bringing new commerce and new residents to the towns along its banks. The mill village of Rochester, for example, gained 20,000 residents between 1815 and 1835. In 1835, the town had ten five-story flour mills and 107 other manufacturing establishments, including a carriage maker and a piano factory.[16] Hungry for labor, and preferring that it be cheap, millowners made women and children the backbone of the new workforce in the mills.

The Factory Workday

Factory production had a rough beginning. Water power was not reliable. In the dry months of summer, the wheels stopped for lack of water; in winter, the problem was ice. Samuel Slater spent two hours each morning chopping ice from the water wheel of his Rhode Island factory.[17] New York factories encountered similar difficulties. Emily Chubbuck's autobiography recalled that during her childhood in the 1820s, factory work in New York state was still enslaved to the weather and to the imperfections of machinery:

> *December, 1828. The ice stopped the waterwheel, and the factory was closed for a few months.*
>
> *May, 1829. It was sometime this month,*

but I do not recollect the day, that the carding-machine broke and I had the afternoon to myself.[18]

Emily Chubbuck was just eleven years old when her family sent her to work in a woolen mill at Pratt's Hollow in Oneida County, New York, in 1828. Her autobiography, written after her marriage to the Reverend Adonirum Judson in 1846, says very little about the work itself, except that she found it unpleasant:

My principal recollections during this summer are of noise and filth, bleeding hands and aching feet, and a very sad heart.[19]

She wrote in more detail about factory work in some of her short stories, published in the *New York Mirror* under the name of Fanny Forrester in the 1830s. While it is important to recognize that her main purpose was to entertain rather than to document her experience, her description of the first day at work for little Grace Linden in a woolen factory may mirror some of her own childhood feelings:

. . . the first morning that Grace looked into the dark, dirty factory, with its strange machinery, making noises that frightened and almost distracted her [with] its greasy blackened walls and disagreeable smells, the sunshine of her heart was well-nigh overshadowed.[20]

This story, called "Grace Linden," also describes in some detail the monotonous work that Emily had done as a child: splicing rolls of carded wool for the spinning machine for twelve hours a day.

A long, low table was behind, covered with a cloth, which, by rollers at each end, was kept creeping slowly onward with its light layer of woolen rolls. These Grace was to take up by handfuls and fasten, one by one, to the ends of those extending down an inclined plane before her, covered in the same manner with a movable cloth.

These rolls, in their turn, were fastened to spindles behind the plane, and a man . . . turned a crank, at the same time walking backward, until the wool was drawn out into a thick thread, afterwards to be spun into a finer one.

Grace had no opportunity to falter in her task; for the man kept up his steady monotonous tramp, tramp, tramp—turn, turn, turn, until her little head grew giddy, and she found a moment's pause to mend a broken thread an inconceivable relief.[21]

The story explains why the work made the child's hands bleed:

Her little fingers, from constant rubbing their backs upon the rolls to fasten them together, began to bleed; her head felt like bursting, for it seemed as though the machinery was constantly grating against her brain; and her feet ached till she thought the bones certainly had perforated the flesh.[22]

The children who tended the machines in mills often worked more than twelve hours a day, six days a week, surrounded by the roaring and the clanking of gears and turbines.

Harriet Robinson penned one of the more vivid accounts of child labor at the time. When she went to work in the mills of Lowell, Massachusetts, Harriet was just ten years old. Her widowed mother supported the family by running a boarding house for forty millhands, and Harriet helped with the cooking and washing after school. But in 1835, her mother decided she was old enough to work in the mill. In her book, *Life Among the Early Mill Girls*, published in 1898, she describes her work day:

. . . The working-hours of all the girls extended from five o'clock in the morning until seven in the evening, with one half hour for breakfast and for dinner. Even the doffers [child workers who took off the full bobbins from the spinning frames and replaced them with empty ones] were forced to be on duty nearly fourteen hours a day, and this was the greatest hardship in the lives of these children.[23]

Education

In theory, the work children performed in factories was similar to the kinds of tasks children had always done; they were helping with production. But they did not learn how to run a household, raise crops or produce a product that would

give them economic independence as adults.

When children worked in households, they worked hard, but, with the exception of slave children, they were generally not worked to the point of exhaustion. Everyone worked at different tasks during the day and even the most exhausting days were followed by days in which the work was less strenuous.

In hand-powered production, the craftsman or -woman controlled the pace of work on hand tools such as the loom and the wheel. In factory production, only those workers who worked at home, away from the watchful eye of the supervisor, could refuse to work at top speed all day long. When the work was done in a factory, under the eye of a supervisor, factory owners could enforce higher productivity; textile workers lost the ability to rest when they needed it.

In the factories, the children helped the machine. It taught them nothing, except to keep up with it. The machines broke down occasionally, but the pace never slowed. The children could not switch to another task. They ended their days too exhausted to study. Emily Chubbuck, for instance, recalled that during her months in the woolen mill, her sister tried to tutor her after work, but she learned very little because she was so tired.

Schooling was not required of children in New York in the 1820s, and many village schools charged tuition. Emily Chubbuck went to such a school in 1831, when she was fourteen. Her autobiography describes how she worked to pay for it:

> *As soon as I came home at night, I used to sit down to sew with Harriet; and it was a rule never to lay the work aside, until, according to our estimation, I had earned enough to clear the expenses of the day—tuition, clothing, food, etc. I have since thought that I was anything but a help to my poor sister, as she always gave me the lightest and easiest work.*[24]

Many families did not send their children to school because of the expense.

The Family System

Some factory owners, such as those at Lowell and Waltham, in Massachusetts, preferred to hire young single men and women. Others tried to recruit children from orphanages. But as the following advertisement in a Utica newspaper in 1813 noted, the most successful labor system in rural areas proved to be the family system:[25]

> *A few sober and industrious families of at least five children each over the age of eight years, are wanted at the Cotton Factory in Whitestown. Widows with large families would do well to attend this notice. Recommendations as to moral character will be expected.*[26]

At times whole households applied for factory work, including not just parents and children, but apprentices, indentured servants, and boarders. For example, the household of Peter Billington seems to have supplemented its needs by having members work at New York Mills in Oneida County during the year 1827. The work records show that between March 31 and April 14, several members of the household worked, but none worked every day.

> *11 days [Peter Billington] $8.25*
> *2 weeks James $3.00*
> *10 3/4 days Lucy $2.24*
> *9 3/4 days Lucina $1.25*[27]

When a family decided to abandon farming and take up factory work, it was often under desperate circumstances. In the following letter, written in 1843, Jemima Sanborn describes how the family's survival strategy during the depression of 1837-1843 required they split up their family. Two children stayed behind to help relatives on the farm, while the others moved with their parents to the factory town of Nashua, New Hampshire. The spelling betrays her lack of education:

> *You wil probely want to know the cause of our moveing here which are many. I will mention a few of them. One of them is the hard times to get a liveinig off the farm for so large a famely. So we have devided our famely for the year. We have left Plummer and Luther to care for the farm with granmarm and Aunt Polly. The rest of us have moved to Nashvill [a part of Nashua] thinking the girls and Charles they would probely worke in the Mill. But we have had bad luck in giting them in. Only Jane has got in yet. Ann has the promis of going to the mill next week. Hannah is going to school. We are in hopes to take a few borders but have not got any yet.*[28]

As Sanborn's letter suggests, the first generation which moved to factory towns did not give up their ties to the land. They kept their gardens and farm animals, and produced their own food and clothing as best they could, and even moved back home or took time off at harvest time.

The early factory did not provide a complete or even transition from the farm. Paternalistic employers sometimes accommodated the agricultural needs of their workforce by paying wages in kind as well as with cash. For example, in 1828, New York Mills employee Abram Camp was paid in part with the right to pasture his cows on land owned by his Oneida County employer.[29]

Many families resisted becoming completely dependent on factory work, even though they could not ever hope to become landowners. Emily Chubbuck's family, for example, clung stubbornly to its desire for independence, even though their rented houses were small and shabby; one was so poorly constructed the rooms filled up with snowdrifts in the winter.[30] Emily's father got a job delivering newspapers; the children were employed at a variety of jobs, including sewing at home, as well as various manufacturing enterprises.[31]

Other families were too poor to rent either land or houses, and both parents and children went to work in factories, often living in factory-owned housing. Paternalistic factory owners sometimes paid them not in cash, but in shelter, food, clothing, cloth, and butter.[32]

Factory owners built housing for their workers in paternalistic "mill villages" such as the one at Clayville, near Utica. The two-family dwellings for the workers stood in a circle along with the owner's mansion, two churches, a school, and a town hall.[33]

Conclusion

By 1850, working class households in the factory villages of New York State no longer included apprentices or indentured servants, but were merely dwelling places for the factory workers.[34] Families without land could no longer produce butter, food, or cloth for themselves. Their days were taken up with factory work; their pay reflected the increasing dependency of these families on the earning power of both children and adults. Although farming remained the primary occupation for more than half of the population of New York State at mid-century, new immigrants would find themselves increasingly dependent on factory work to earn a living (see chapters 6 and 7).

The story of early factory development in New York State combines the transformation of household work with new innovations in technology. Economic growth and technological change between 1790 and 1830 brought prosperity to many families and changed the nature of childhood for many children. In families that prospered, the home became quite separate from the workplace; children no longer worked but went to school. But in poor families, children's work became even more vital to their survival, but it offered little hope for an education.

Endnotes

1. A.C. Kendrick, *The Life and Letters of Mrs. Emily C. Judson* (New York: Sheldon & Company, 1863), 12-32.

2. For a description of eighteenth-century iron plantations in New York, see Irene D. Neu, "The Iron Plantations of Colonial New York," *New York History* 33 (1952), 3-24.

3. Bruce Laurie, *Artisans into Workers: Labor in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), 35.

4. Ibid., 59.

5. David Maldwyn Ellis, "Whitestown: From Yankee Outpost to Cradle of Reform," *New York History* (January 1984), 39-41.

6. See, for example, Robert Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978); Daniel J. Walkowitz, *Worker City, Company Town: Iron and Cotton Worker Protest in Troy and Cohoes, New York, 1855-84* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1981); Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1855* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Stuart M. Blumin, *The Urban Threshold: Growth and Change in A Nineteenth-Century American Community* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976); Clyde and Sally Griffen, *Natives and Newcomers: The Ordering of Opportunity in Mid-Nineteenth Century Poughkeepsie* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978).

7. David Maldwyn Ellis, "Whitestown," *New York History* (January 1984), 41.

8. Ibid., 41.

9. Kendrick, *The Life and Letters of Mrs. Emily C. Judson*, 23-24.

10. Miriam Braverman, "'Small Help': Child Labor in United States Industry, the Family System, 1790-1860," unpublished manuscript, author's possession, 1990.

11. Joseph and Frances Geis, *The Ingenious Yankees: The Men, Ideas and Machines that Transformed a Nation, 1776-1876* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1976), 59-60.

12. Ibid.

13. Edith Abbott, "Child Labor in America Before 1870," in Grace Abbott, *The Child and the State, Volume One; Legal Status in the Family Apprenticeship and Child Labor* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1938), 270-276.

14. Ibid., 41-42; Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 19-59.

15. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 41-43.

16. Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 17-19.

17. Geis, *The Ingenious Yankees*, 60.

18. A.C. Kendrick, *The Life and Letters of Emily C. Judson* (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1863), 17.

19. Ibid., 16.

20. Fanny Forrester, *Trippings in Authorland* (New York: Paine and Burgess, 1846), 93.

21. Ibid., 97.

22. Ibid.

23. Harriet H. Robinson, *Loom and Spindle or Life Among the Mill Girls, revised edition* (Kalua, Hawaii: Press Pacifica), 19.

24. Kendrick, *The Life and Letters of Mrs. Emily C. Judson*, 23.

25. Edith Abbott, "Child Labor in America Before 1870," in Abbott, *The Child and the State*, 274.

26. *Utica Patriot*, 1813, in Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 44.

27. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 46.

28. Thomas Dublin, *Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 175.

29. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 44, 47.

30. Kendrick, *The Life and Letters of Mrs. Emily C. Judson*, 20.

31. Ibid., 17, 23, 27.

32. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 47.

33. Ibid.

34. See Thomas Bender, *Toward an Urban Vision: Ideas and Institutions in Nineteenth Century America*, (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 71-128.

Teaching Strategies for Chapter 5

Background for Activity A

The first factory workers came from farm families which saw the factory as a way to earn additional income. The story of early factory development in New York State combines the transformation of household work with new innovations in technology.

Activity A

Students will use narratives to capture the sights and sounds of the early factories as well as the feelings of the early factory workers. Students will role-play the early factory experiences of children.

Directions

1. Have students read the Chubbuck and Robinson excerpts from Janet Greene's essay "From Farm to Factory."

2. After studying the excerpts, students should answer the clarifying questions on the student worksheet *"Sights and Sounds."*

3. Using the information from the answers to the questions, have students write dialogue for a scene depicting the sights, sounds, and feelings of the early factory experiences. This can be done in small groups. Students can role play for the class or video tape the scene for later veiwing. Students will also be asked to use this information in Activity B.

Vocabulary

household production
out work
mass production
textile
carding
mill
monotonous
doffer
loom
tuition
paternalistic

Background for Activity B

As families became more dependent on the income from child labor, the opportunities for a child to attend school diminished. Children in factories did not learn skills that would help them gain economic independence as adults. Working in the factory offered little time or hope for an education.

Activity B

Students will trace changes in the way a family depended on their children to provide for itself and explain how the changes affected the educational opportunities of children.

Directions

1. Provide students with the background information from Janet Greene's essay "From Farm to Factory."

2. Use the following as a basis for a class discussion. Students should take notes for use in the essay.

a. Trace the ways in which the labor of children changed from a rural setting to a factory setting in the early 1800s. Discussion should progress from household production to outwork to factory. A concept map can be used to take notes.

b. Emily Chubbuck recalled that during her months in the woolen mill, her sister tried to tutor her after work, but she learned very little because she was so tired. In 1831, she described how she worked to pay for her tuition:

> *As soon as I came home at night, I used to sit down to sew with Harriet; and it was a rule never to lay the work aside, until, according to our estimation, I had earned enough to clear the expenses of the day—tuition, clothing, food, etc. I have since thought that I was anything but a help to my poor sister, as she always gave me the lightest and easiest work.*

Read this excerpt to the students. Then ask: What did Emily mean by "earned enough to clear the expenses of the day?" Why did her sister give her easy work?

c. Discuss the differences between public education then and now. Include the payment of tuition. Students can create a chart to record this information.

3. Using the information from Activity A and the above discussion, have students write an essay which (a) traces the changes in which families used their children to provide for themselves and (b) how these changes affected the educational opportunities of children.

Chubbuck and Robinson Excerpts

Read the following excerpts to answer the accompanying questions. Use the information to write a scene which will depict the early factory experiences.

Excerpts:

1. My principal recollections during this summer are of noise and filth, bleeding hands and aching feet, and a very sad heart.

2. . . . the first morning that Grace looked into the dark, dirty factory, with its strange machinery, making noises that frightened and almost distracted her (with) its greasy blackened walls an disagreeable smells, the sunshine of her heart was well-nigh overshadowed.

3. A long, low table behind, covered with a cloth, which, by rollers at each end, was kept creeping slowly onward with its light layer of woolen rolls. These Grace was to take up by handfuls and fasten, one by one, to the ends of those extending down an inclined plane before her, covered in the same manner with a movable cloth.

These rolls, in their turn, were fastened to spindles behind the plane, and a man...turned a crank, at the same time walking backward, until the wool was drawn out into a thick thread, afterwards to be spun into a finer one.

Grace had no opportunity to falter in her task; for the man kept up his steady monotonous tramp, tramp, tramp—turn, turn, turn, until her little head grew giddy, and she found a moment's pause to mend a broken thread an inconceivable relief.

4. Her little fingers, from constant rubbing their backs upon the rolls to fasten them together, began to bleed; her head felt like bursting, for it seemed as thought the machinery was constantly grating against her brain; and her feet ached till she thought the bones certainly had perforated the flesh.

5. . . . The working-hours of all the girls extended from five o'clock in the morning until seven in the evening, with one half hour for breakfast and for dinner. Even the doffers [child workers who took off the full bobbins from the spinning frames and replaced them with empty ones] were forced to be on duty nearly fourteen hours a day, and this was the greatest hardship in the lives of these children.

Source: The first four sets of excerpts are from Emily Chubbuck; the fifth from Harriet Robinson, *Loom and Spindle or Life Among the Mill Girls.*

Sights and Sounds

Activity A

1. Emily Chubbuck and Harriet Robinson used their senses to describe life in the early mills. For each of the senses listed below, describe their early factory experiences.

a. Sights:

b. Sounds:

c. Smells:

2. What kinds of tasks did each perform as a child worker?

a. Emily Chubbuck:

b. Harriet Robinson:

3. Identify the physical discomforts and injuries they suffered.

4. How long was Harriet Robinson's work day? How did she refer to the work day?

5. Using the information you found, create dialogue for a scene that portrays young factory workers in the early 1800s. Keep props simple and to a minimum. Your group scene should last two to five minutes.

Enrichment Activity

Activity: Create an alternative book report for *Life Among the Early Mill Girls* by Harriet Robinson or the novel *Lyddie* by Katherine Paterson.

• Consider working hours, working conditions, wages, free time, co-workers, living conditions, and education of these women.

1. Create a fictional diary of a young factory worker in the early 1800s.

   • Write entries for three to five days

2. Create a dialogue between two children who worked in the factories in the 1800s. It is the end of the day and they are discussing their work day on the way home.

3. Illustrate a scene from the book by making a diarama or poster.

4. Pretend you are the character/person in your book. You can discuss with the class your work experiences or write a first-person narrative describing your life.

5. Become the author and tell why you wrote this book. This might be in the form of a magazine article or a talk-show dialogue.

6. Create a dialogue between you and the main character/person of your book. Discuss her work and feelings.

7. Make a diarama or floor plan which gives a tour of the factory.

Chapter 6: Urban Manufacturing and Sweatshops Before 1860

After 1820 in New York City, poor children worked at home, helping their mothers. Their small hands sewed buttons on fancy vests for gentlemen. When the little hands got tired, the children went outside to play in the streets. But their mothers—who were native-born Americans, African-Americans, and Irish or German immigrants—kept on sewing, sewing, sewing, for fourteen hours a day.

The women and children were urban outworkers. Their homes were sometimes called "sweatshops." Sweatshops developed in cities such as New York, Boston, Baltimore, and Philadelphia between 1820 and 1860—product of the same industrial revolution whose noisy machines had transformed mill towns. In this case, it was a silent one. No noise, no machinery, just thousands of hands, working at home, performing a single task all day long.

With parents working hard to survive, they had no time to supervise their children. The children, when they were not working at home, roamed the streets. These children did not go to school; they were not apprenticed. On their own, they learned to earn money doing odd jobs. A boy could get paid to hold someone's horse; girls swept sidewalks for a few pennies. The children were resourceful. They also learned to beg and steal.

Concerned citizens of New York City took note of what was happening to the children. Each saw the problem from different social vantage points:

"Give us free schools for our children!" cried the Workingmen's Party in 1829.

"Pay the seamstresses higher wages!" urged journalist Mathew Carey in 1833.

"Get the children away from their worthless parents and the wicked city!" intoned Charles Loring Brace, at the founding of the Children's Aid Society in 1852.

The population of New York City grew by 700,000 people between 1820 and 1860.[1] Immigrants from new countries—chiefly Ireland and Germany—added thousands to the workforce at the same time as new developments in transportation and technology reshaped the way Americans worked.[2]

This chapter will focus on new kinds of workplaces and the way children worked in New York City between 1820 and 1860 and conclude with a view of early movements for reform. While there are no "typical" workplaces in New York City in the early nineteenth century, this chapter describes four types of workplaces in which children generally worked: the factory; the small workshop; the home or sweatshop; and the street.[3]

Manufacturing in New York City

New York City developed a sizable number of large-scale manufacturing enterprises in the early nineteenth century, but there were three factors that kept Manhattan from becoming a town of large water-powered factories such as those that were developing elsewhere in the Northeast and in upstate New York: lack of waterpower; slow transportation; and expensive real estate.

New York had plenty of water. But its vast harbor did not provide the falling water needed to power factories. As firms expanded, they gradually began to leave the city. John Howe moved his pin factory from New York to Connecticut in 1838; Colgate Soap moved to Jersey City in 1847; William Adams moved his textile factory to Paterson, New Jersey, in 1857. All cited a need for more waterpower.[4]

Transportation out of New York was also slow and expensive because the ports were so crowded. "There is a perpetual jam and lock of vehicles along the chief thoroughfare; the traffic is outgrowing the capacity of the streets to admit it," wrote a London *Times* reporter of New York in 1857.[5]

Finally, industries which required large amounts of space to expand could not afford Manhattan real estate, and they, too, left the city. For example, when Kreischer and Sons expanded their Delancy Street brickmaking operations, they first built a second factory on Staten Island. After 1873, however, they tore down the Delancy Street factory and

put up a tenement house on the site. Rent was apparently more lucrative than bricks in Manhattan.[6]

However, the same density that made New York City inappropriate for factory processing of raw materials—such as clay into bricks—made it very appropriate for the manufacture of finished goods. The city had a vast supply of cheap unskilled labor. Its location on the Hudson River made it readily accessible. In fact, large factories powered first by water, and later, by steam, ringed the city in New Jersey, upstate New York, and Connecticut. Thus, while hat-making moved from Manhattan to Danbury, Connecticut, the completed hats were shipped back to Manhattan where women and children in sweatshops trimmed them with ribbons, feathers, artificial flowers, or veils. [7]

Workshops

Manufacturing in New York City in 1850 was largely carried out in small workshops or homes by workers using hand tools instead of machine powered ones. The work of some small shops was linked to larger ones which required more capital to operate, both within the city and outside it. For instance, small workshops that manufactured piano keys supplied large piano factories; large tailoring establishments subcontracted much of their sewing to women and girls who sewed at home.[8]

Small shops of nineteenth-century New York were quite different from the home workshops of eighteenth-century artisans. In the nineteenth century, the owner or master craftsman whose business prospered moved away from his place of work. His employees no longer lived in his household, but found their lodgings in boarding houses.

Some of these workshops were much larger than the household workshops had been, and the workforce fluctuated with the demand for work. Duncan Phyfe employed one hundred workers at the height of his furniture production, but his was an unusually large enterprise. Smaller concerns were more typical. Historical records are scarce, but it is apparent from the Manufacturing Census of 1820 that many employed children. For example, John Van Boskirk made furniture with four men and three boys in 1820; Peter and George Lorillard employed about thirty men and fifteen children in their tobacco and snuff manufactory; and the Bruce Typecasting firm had eighteen men, six women, and eight children at work in 1820.[9]

Apprentices

Some workshops merely hired children for wages. Others engaged children and teenagers as apprentices, but under very different terms from those in the early eighteenth century. Often there were no formal contracts. Instead of having apprenticeships for seven years, they were seldom for more than two to four years, and frequently for only a few months. The association could be ended at a moment's notice by either party, as shipbuilder Boss Sneeden told young Frank Harley when he began his apprenticeship:

> *I don't want any binding indentures. . . . When I don't like you, or you don't like me, or we mutually dislike each other, we'll quit and separate.*[10]

Instead of receiving room and board, apprentices were paid wages. Families who apprenticed their children were still responsible for feeding, clothing, and housing them. If the apprentice had no family, he lived in a boardinghouse which provided him with a bed, meals, and laundry and paid for it out of his wages.[11]

Many craftsmen and journeymen protested that employers who hired wage workers instead of taking apprentices undermined the skills of the craft. It was not that children were working for wages that upset them. It was that employers hired half-trained children to do the work of adults and paid them much less.[12]

Families with children, though, especially those recently arrived from Ireland, viewed child labor differently. Families in Ireland often complained that they could get no work for their children. Moreover, apprenticeships in Britain were very expensive. A family had to pay quite a sum to induce a craftsman to train a child, and most of the Irish who immigrated to America could not afford such training for their children. However, encouraged by articles in the British press, Irish immigrants arrived in America expecting that their children would be able to earn money for the family, and were delighted to find both jobs for children and masters who would take on their sons without a fee.[13]

One such article appeared in *The British Mechanic and Laborer's Handbook:*

In America, whatever be the extent of a man's family, and whether girls or boys, they will not be found the very heavy burthen they too frequently are in old countries. Except in the difficulty of getting them over there, number will be no disadvantage, owing to the constant demand there is for their services. It is the custom to send children out to employment at the early age of nine or ten years, and . . . fair remuneration may readily be obtained for them.[14]

Division of Labor: Sweatshops

The making of garments for men and women was one of the largest industries in nineteenth-century New York City. While the work was divided between large-scale manufacturing outside the city, smaller craft workshops, and sweatshops in the home, everywhere it employed children in the most exploitative and often confining working conditions.[15]

Before 1800, tailors and dressmakers made better clothing to order in their shops. Everyday clothing and all work clothes, underwear, linens, aprons, and caps were made at home by women and female children. There were very few ready-made clothes in America, except rough, unfitted garments worn by sailors, soldiers, and slaves.[16] Scholars estimate that two-thirds of all clothes in America were made at home in 1810.[17]

After 1820, the nation's textile mills increased cloth production. Cotton from the plantation South provided raw materials and a growing workforce needed clothing. One of the first markets to be affected by this change was the ready-made or "slop" clothing trade. "Slops" was the tailors' term for clothing made for soldiers, sailors, and slaves. These coarse and unfitted garments were made by New York tailors and journeymen in slack times, and by women hired by tailors to stitch up the work in their homes. "Slop work" was a generic term: shoemakers used the same word for the unfitted shoes they made for the same market.[18]

Planters in the South had always relied on imported goods for many of their needs, including some of the clothing for their slaves. After 1820, demand for these garments increased as the enslaved population increased; slavery expanded in the Lower South and larger plantations were established. These new plantations had cotton production as their primary activity; they were less self-sufficient than the older plantations of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Owners preferred to buy clothes for the slaves rather than produce them locally, and ready-made clothes for both slaves and masters were shipped from New York.[19]

Outwork or "Sweating"

Enterprising tailors saw there was money to be made in the new market for slaves' clothing. They began to hire more women to sew in their own homes. When the Erie Canal opened in 1825, demand for ready-made clothing increased. Pressed by the tailors to increase production and paid low rates (piece rates) for each piece they sewed, women recruited their children to help with the sewing.

Business was booming, but wages were low. The work was divided into tiny segments and required very little skill. This division is called "sweating" and occupations that use it were referred to as "sweated trades" in the nineteenth century. The word—and practice—are still present in twentieth century "sweatshops."

Some households sewed sleeves, others did buttonholes, still others assembled the whole garment. The most complex part—coordinating all the parts of the operation—was organized by a merchant clothier, sometimes called a "jobber," who set up the system. He engaged a master tailor and his shop workers (called "inside" workers). These skilled people cut the cloth for garments. From them, the work was passed on to subcontractors, who located women who would do the sewing in their homes (called "outside" workers or "outworkers").

Children, unless they were apprenticed to tailors or dressmakers, were among the "outworkers." They learned to sew not entire shirts, but parts of shirts. They put in basting threads, did straight stitching, sewed on buttons and carried the finished work back to the "piecemaster" where they haggled over the pay and picked up bundles of new work.

By 1830, some shops employed as many as 500 women to sew in their homes.[20] By 1860, more than 16,000 women and children made clothes in New York City: rough cotton clothes for slaves in the Deep South; dungarees, flannel drawers, and figured shirts for workers on the Erie Canal and farmers in the Mid West; overalls and calico shirts for the single men in the California Gold Rush; work clothes for construction workers; and fine

fancy vests for Southern plantation owners, travellers, and gentlemen visiting the city.[21]

The entire garment industry was built on sweated labor. Even the exclusive establishment of Brooks Brothers tailors had seventy employees in its shop and an invisible 2,000 to 3,000 homeworkers in 1860.[22]

Many other industries used outwork in nineteenth-century New York City. Working at home, women and children made artificial flowers, fringes, tassels, embroidery, and parasols. Even very small children could make boxes and matches; they worked with their parents or older siblings, cutting and gluing boxes, dipping matchheads in phosphorus, and cutting matchsticks.[23]

It was a profitable system for manufacturers. Wages were low, workers were paid by the volume of work they completed (by the piece), and there were few overhead costs; outworkers paid for their own rent, heat, and candles. Constant wage deflation and the subcontracting system created a pattern of familial exploitation and tension as male subcontractors would find themselves pressuring their wives for more and faster work. The wives in turn pressured their children to produce more goods more and more quickly.

Journalist Mathew Carey was one who tried to publicize the low wages paid to women in the garment industry in 1833:

> *I have been pleading the cause of probably 12,000 women in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore . . . who are grievously oppressed . . . while many of those for whom they toil, make immense fortunes, by their labors.*
>
> *Nine cotton shirts a week are as much as the great mass of seamstresses can make. These shirts are frequently made for 6, 8, and 10 cents, leaving 54, 72, 90 cents a week for the incessant application of a human being, during thirteen or fourteen hours a day, for the payment of rent, the purchase of food, clothes, drink, soap, candles, and fuel!!![24]*

Carey's pleas were ignored. Wages went down. By 1853, seamstresses earned about $91 a year, far below the $600 needed by a working man, his wife, and two children.[25]

Sweatshops and the Family Economy

"Outwork" could not support a family, but in many cases it was the only income for households without an adult male breadwinner. Work was seasonal in nineteenth-century New York. Men who worked in shipbuilding and on the docks were often unable to find steady work in the winter months when shipping was halted by ice in the waters. Sometimes the earnings of the women and children fed the family. The men were often imprisoned for their debts.[26] Finally, because the work was frequently dangerous, a breadwinner could easily be disabled at work, leaving his wife and children to earn the living for the family.

Despite the seasonality and danger, men and boys eagerly competed for new jobs building canals and railroads. Residents of New York City often left their families for several months in the year as they traveled in search of work, but they often found that the work ruined their health. Mathew Carey described how injuries and yellow fever threatened the health of some workingmen who built the canals and forced their wives and children to go to work:

> *Thousands of our laboring people travel hundreds of miles in quest of employment on canals, at 62, 75, and 87 cents per day, paying a dollar and a half or two dollars a week for their board, leaving families behind, depending on them for support. They labor frequently in marshy grounds which destroys their health, often irrevocably. They return to their poor families—with ruined constitutions, with a sorry pittance, most laboriously earned, and take to their beds sick and unable to work. Hundreds are swept off annually, many of them leaving numerous and helpless families.[27]*

Many men died from injuries at work or from recurring yellow fever and cholera epidemics. Nineteenth-century New York City had many families headed by widows and single women. In 1855, 59 percent of working women in some districts in New York City were supporting children without any male assistance.[28]

The price of low wages for men and women was often paid with the lives of their children. Historian Christine Stansell relates just such a story from the records of The Society for the Relief of Poor Widows in New York City during the depression of

1855 when the price of flour rose above the means of the poor:

> *. . . one of the managers visited a respectable Widow, who had maintained herself and her three little girls by sewing. The eldest had just died from starvation, which the [Society] ladies delicately termed "disease aggravated by improper food," and the second child was also sick with the same malady. When the visitor inquired about the family's needs, the woman asked for flour:*
>
> *"But you have thought before that [corn] meal would answer," said the Manager, "and you know we hardly think it right to give flour at its present price."*
>
> *"Yes," said the woman, bursting into tears, "we have lived on meal this winter, but the Doctor says it killed Mary and now Katy is getting in the same way, and I cannot let her die too."*[29]

Some of the poor organized to improve their lot. Seamstresses joined trade unions; there were periodic strikes and protests each time the price of flour went up. The most dramatic protest occurred in 1837, when men and women protesting the price of flour burst into a warehouse and broke open the barrels of flour. Uprisings such as these, however, were quelled by authorities.[30] So on a less dramatic level, women and their children worked out their own day-to-day solutions. Prostitution was the most obvious choice for a seamstress with children to feed. The children themselves learned to beg and steal.[31]

The Streets

Children at work at home, in factories, or in workshops attracted little notice of the authorities or of social reformers. The New York Workingmen's Party, well aware that short apprenticeships and sweated labor meant no future for their children, demanded universal free public education as early as 1829.[32]

Public education was available to the poor in New York State, but in order to receive it without paying a percentage of the cost, a family was required to declare that they were paupers. Many poor but hard-working families, refused to do this, so their children went without education.[33] Less than half of school-age children in New York City between 1825 and 1850 attended school.[34]

On the streets, the children learned to make a living. They ran errands, held horses, swept crossings, sold food. Small children, perhaps six and seven years old, became scavengers. They haunted the docks, where unexpected spills yielded tea, coffee, sugar, or cotton. They stole small pieces of coal, wood, and ashes from back alleys. They found bits of rope, canvas, and glass. All of these things could be used or sold to junk dealers. It was a full-time job, and not without its perils. Small children sometimes accumulated large police records.[35]

Many religious and charitable societies worked to help the poor, but did so from a moralizing and paternalist perspective. Perhaps the most influential was the Children's Aid Society, founded by Charles Loring Brace in 1852. Brace was less interested in the wage scale of poor families than in the condition of the children he saw in the street. He called them "the dangerous classes" and blamed the parents for the plight of their children:

> *Thousands are the children of poor foreigners, who have permitted them to grow up without school, education, or religion. All the neglect and bad education and evil example of a poor class tend to form others, who, as they mature, swell the ranks of ruffians and criminals. So, at length, a great multitude of ignorant, untrained, passionate, irreligious boys and young men are formed, who become the "dangerous class" of our city.*[36]

Brace proposed to rescue these "vagrant, homeless and criminal children" through programs of education and industrial training.[37] Like many nineteenth-century reformers, Brace and his organization believed in the purity of country life and the noble character of the yeoman farmer. Much of the energy of the Society involved removing children from their parents and from the city altogether. In the first twenty years of the Children's Aid Society, 164 boys and 43 girls were sent off to live and work in the country.[38]

Beginning in the 1850s, the Society made arrangements to ship children from the city to farming communities across the country. These "orphan trains" were met by farming families who selected children and took them home to live—as adopted children or as free laborers, depending on the family. The Society continued this practice well into the twentieth century.[39]

The Children's Aid Society did not always win the respect or trust of the people they were trying to protect. The poor called them "child stealers."[40]

Conclusion

Reformers did not change the lives of the majority of the working poor in New York City. Neither did the Civil War, which began in 1861 (see chapter 7). Between 1855 and 1870, as large-scale manufacturing continued to leave New York City, employment increased in smaller shops and sweated industries: cigar making, furniture, boots and shoes, precious metals, printing, and the needle trades.

The state ruled in 1867 that all public schools should be free,[41] but many working class and immigrant families perceived schooling as a luxury. Many children and their mothers continued to work, indeed, needed to work in sweated industries to meet basic family needs.

Endnotes

1. Richard B. Stott, *Workers in the Metropolis: Class, Ethnicity, and Youth in Antebellum New York City* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 69.

2. For an overview of this process, see George Rogers Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution: 1815-1860*, Vol. 4 of *The Economic History of the United States* (London: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1951).

3. Much of the material for this lesson comes from Stott, *Workers in the Metropolis* and Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982).

4. Stott, *Workers in the Metropolis*, 10-33.

5. Quoted in Stott, *Workers in the Metropolis*, 13.

6. Stott, *Workers in the Metropolis*, 17-19.

7. Ibid., 24.

8. Ibid., 23-24.

9. Ibid., 55, 35.

10. Ibid., 98-99.

11. Elizabeth Blackmar, *Manhattan for Rent, 1785-1850* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 45-71.

12. Stott, *Workers in the Metropolis*, 99 and 87-122; see also Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 33.

13. Stott, *Workers in the Metropolis*, 96-97.

14. Quoted in Stott, *Workers in the Metropolis*, 97.

15. The following section is based on Stansell, *City of Women*, 106-125.

16. Mary Beth North, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1980), 23-24.

17. Stott, *Workers in the Metropolis*, 38.

18. Stott, *Workers in the Metropolis*, 38; Stansell, *City of Women*, 107.

19. E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro in the United States* (New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1957), maps II, III, IV, and V.

20. Stott, *Workers in the Metropolis*, 37.

21. Stansell, *City of Women*, 108-109.

22. Ibid., 109.

23. Ibid., 116.

24. Mathew Carey, "An Appeal to the Wealthy of the Land" in Leon Stein, ed., *Out of the Sweatshop: The Struggle for Industrial Democracy* (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1977), 6-7.

25. Stansell, *City of Women*, 111.

26. Wilentz, *Chants Democratic*, 203.

27. Quoted in Foner, *History of the Labor Movement*, 99. For a description of seasonal activities in Kingston, New York, a canal town, see Stuart M. Blumin, *The Urban Threshold: Growth and Change in a Nineteenth Century Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 50-74.

28. Stansell, *City of Women*, 111.

29. Ibid., 110.

30. Wilentz, *Chants Democratic*, 286-296.

31. Stansell, *City of Women*, 176-177.

32. Wilentz, *Chants Democratic*, 203, 207, 208.

33. Minerva Padden, an Irish immigrant, corresponded in 1846 with the family of wealthy New Yorker James W. Beekman, telling him of the poverty of her family and asking for help. Beekman was impressed with her pride and later worked to eliminate the tuition requirement for children. See Phillip L. White, "An Irish Immigrant Housewife on the New York Frontier," *New York History* 48 (April 1967), 188, n. 4.

34. Stott, *Workers in the Metropolis*, 97; see also Carl Kaestle, *The Evolution of an Urban School System--New York City, 1750-1850* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973).

35. Stansell, *City of Women*, 50-51.

36. Charles Loring Brace, *The Dangerous Classes of New York, and Twenty Years' Work Among Them* (New York: Wynkoop and Hallenbeck, Publishers, 1880), 28.

37. Susan and David Almindinger, eds., *The American People in the Industrial City* (West Haven, CT: Pendulum Press, Inc., 1973), 41-47.

38. Ibid., 45.

39. Charles Loring Brace, *The Dangerous Classes of New York, and Twenty Years' Work Among Them*, 223-233. See also Wendy Hearn, "End of the Line: Orphan Trains" (St. Louis, MO: Videophase, 1989), a videotaped documentary which features interviews with elderly St.Louis residents who were sent west from New York City by the Children's Aid Society.

40. Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 33.

41. Stott, *Workers in the Metropolis*, 23-23.

Teaching Strategies for Chapter 6

Background for Activity A

As urban manufacturing developed before 1860 many men and women were involved in sweated labor. Children sometimes helped the family earn a living, but many were left unsupervised. These children learned on their own how to earn a few pennies, to beg, or to steal. Religious and charitable organizations tried to solve this social problem by removing children from the streets.

Activity A

Students will evaluate the use of orphan trains in the 1850s. They will also compare and contrast inner-city problems involving children then and today.

Directions

1. Provide students with the background information from Janet Greene's essay on "Urban Manufacturing and Sweatshops." Inform students about Charles Loring Brace and his work.

2. The teacher should read the Charles Loring Brace quote aloud to the class.

3. Divide the class into groups of three or four students.

4. Distribute the worksheet "Orphan Train." Have each group answer the questions.

5. To conclude, discuss what influence the creation of urban sweatshops had on society in general and children in particular.

Vocabulary

sweatshop
sweating
garment
"stop work"
jobber
"inside" workers
overhead costs
wage deflation
epidemic
pauper
orphan train
real estate
tenement
tailor
boarding house
exploitation

Orphan Train

Answer the questions below basing your answers on this 1852 quote of Charles Loring Brace.

> *Thousands are the children of poor foreigners, who have permitted them to grow up without school, education, or religion. All the neglect and bad education and evil example of a poor class tend to form others, who, as they mature, swell the ranks of ruffians and criminals. So, at length, a great multitude of ignorant, untrained, passionate, irreligious boys and young men are formed, who become the "dangerous class" of our city.*

1. Whom did Charles Loring Brace blame for the number of children having to make a living on the street?

2. According to Brace what did children have to do without?

3. What did Brace believe they would become?

4. How do you think Brace would solve the problem of children making a living on the street?

5. In the 1850s, children working in the streets of New York City were sent to farm families across the country. The Children's Aid Society organized these "orphan trains." Was this a good solution to the problem? Defend your answer.

6. Compare and contrast problems involving unsupervised children in 1852 and today.

Background for Activity B

Urban manufacturing depended on sweated labor. Individuals known as jobbers would maximize their profit by dividing the work into tiny segments each completed by different "outworkers." These tasks required little skill and were usually done in the home. The entire garment industry was built upon sweated labor.

Activity B

Students will analyze a product, describe the process used to make it, and explain how they would use sweated labor to make a profit.

Directions

1. Provide students with the definition of sweated labor and examples from Janet Greene's essay. Students should understand the role of children in this manufacturing process and the types of products manufactured. In addition, students need to know how manufacturers obtained child labor workers, under what conditions they worked, and how profitable it was for the manufacturers. Inform students that many factories were located outside New York City near water power, while large numbers of laborers were located in the city.

2. Divide the class into groups. Half of the groups will examine modern footwear and the rest will examine modern shirts. Each group should:

- identify the different parts of the item.
- identify the different materials used in production.
- list in order the steps required to make the product.

Assign each group an item—a shoe (sneaker) or a shirt. While footwear can be removed from a student's foot for examination, it is advisable to have several old shirts available prior to the lesson for students to examine. Students should record their answers on a separate sheet of paper.

3. Based on the information gathered have students write a short essay which answers the question below. Remind students to review the information learned about sweated labor as well as the process jobbers used to make items. They must also include the role of children.

Pretend you are a manufacturer in the 1850s.

How would you use sweated labor to maximize your profit in the manufacturing of your product?

Background for Activity C

Apprenticeships continued well into the nineteenth century. The formal contract or the "indenture of apprenticeship" became standardized by the 1800s. Parents transferred their legal rights concerning their children to the master. The master and the apprentice both promised certain things.

Activity C

Students will write and create an indenture of apprenticeship.

Directions

1. Review the concept of apprenticeship as discussed in chapter 3. Provide students with the indenture of apprenticeship for John Meighen. Explain that the original would be more difficult to study than a typed version. Have them first peruse the document following the three steps in chapter 1 for reading a document. **Then** have them answer the questions. The answers should serve as a springboard into further discussion.

2. Using the information from the above activities, have students write an apprentice contract between a master and the parents of a child to be apprenticed as it might have been written in New York.

Meighen Indenture

THIS INDENTURE Witnesseth,
THAT John Meighen of the City of New York

now aged Nineteen years Four months----------
by and with the consent of his mother Ruth Meighen
hath voluntarily, and of his own free will and accord, put and bound himself apprentice to
William Vine of the City of New York,Marble Cutter
to learn the art, trade, and mystery of Marble Cutting----------
and as an apprentice, to serve from this date, for and during and until the full end and term of
One year and Eight months----------
next ensuing; during all which time, the said apprentice faithfully, honestly, and industriously
shall serve his master his secrets keep, and lawful commands every where readily obey, and
at all time protect and preserve the goods and property of his said master and not suffer or
allow any to be injured or wasted; he shall not buy, sell, nor traffic with his own goods, or the
goods of others, not be absent from his said master's service, day nor night, without
leave, and in all things shall behave himself as a faithful apprentice ought to do, during the
said term. And the said master shall use and employ the utmost of his endeavors to
teach, or cause the said apprentice to be taught or instructed, in the art, trade, and mystery of
Marble Cutting----------
The said Wm Vine to Pay to said apprentice
Four Shillings Per day for every days work,
done by said apprentice to the Fourth day of
June next ensuing--and Five Shillings & Fourpence
Per day for the same to the end of the said
Term of apprenticeship----------
And for the true performance of all and singular the covenants and agreements aforesaid, the
said parties bind themselves, each unto the other, firmly, by these presents.
In Witness Whereof, the parties of these presents have hereunto set their hands and
seals, the ------ day of October one thousand eight
hundred and Thirty One----------

Sealed and Delivered
in the Presence of — John Mai

Wm Vine

Mr L James

I do hereby consent to, and approve of, the binding of my son apprentice to Wm Vine as in
the above mentioned.
Witness to the Signature of Mrs Ruth Meighen — John Wattrass — her Ruth X Meighen mark

Source: New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Albany, NY

Meighen Indenture

Answer these questions in your notes unless directed otherwise:

1. Circle the following on the indenture:

   a. the apprentice's name and age
   b. the person who legally signed for him
   c. the master and his craft

2. Name others listed in the indenture. Why did they sign?

3. a. What is the length of the apprenticeship?

   b. What is the date of the context?

   c. How old will the apprentice be at the end of the term?

   d. Why is this age important?

   e. At what age can a person now legally sign his/her own name to a contract?

4. Why did Ruth sign and not the apprentice?

5. Underline what the apprentice promises to do.

6. What does the master promise to do?

Chapter 7: The Civil War Years

Twelve-year-old Clarence McKenzie of Brooklyn was perhaps the first person killed in the Civil War. He was one of 40,000 drum and bugle corps members in the Union Army. In his job as a drummer boy for the 13th Regiment of the New York National Guard, Clarence learned to pound out the rhythms to signal troop maneuvers during battle. He never made it to the battlefield, however. As he camped with his regiment in Annapolis, Maryland, he was accidentally killed when a gun discharged in his tent.

Drummer boys were usually between ten and fifteen years old. They marched and drilled with their regiments, endured the shock of combat, and grew up on the battlefields to became soldiers themselves. Some lived to reminisce for their grandchildren. Others, like Clarence, never came home.[1]

The Civil War demanded much from children, whether they worked as members of the armed forces or as members of the workforce on the home front. Thousands of women and children went to work in factories to replace the men who enlisted to fight.[2]

Some said the factories were as dangerous as the battlefield. Part of the danger came from new machinery. Powered by water or more commonly, steam, the factories had more employees, more equipment and more danger than ever before. Girls who worked in the Harmony Mills weaving woolen cloth for army blankets and uniforms at Cohoes, New York, tended eight looms apiece. These looms ran at speeds 65 percent higher than looms in the 1840s, when girls had responsibility for four looms. The result was higher production but more accidents involving children and other workers.[3]

This chapter looks at child labor in New York during the Civil War and examines the responses of children and their families to conditions of life and labor that were unprecedented in American history.

The War Begins

The Civil War began in 1861 at the end of an economic downturn. The Panic of 1857 had plunged many wage-earning families into poverty, particularly skilled workers such as tailors and shoemakers who were losing their jobs to machinery. The sewing machine, for example, which came into widespread commercial use after 1850, could sew seven times faster than the most expert needlewomen. Manufacturers quickly adopted it for producing shoes and clothing. Hand sewers could not keep up with goods produced much more quickly on sewing machines, and their earning power plummeted.[4] In response, shoemakers and other workers renewed their earlier efforts to organize unions to establish a living wage, but the courts did not support their right to bargain collectively over wages.

Both the depression and the beginning of the Civil War derailed further efforts to unionize. Male wage-earners enlisted as soldiers in record numbers, leaving disputes over hours and wages unresolved as they rallied to the Union's cause.[5]

Children At War

In New York State, both African-American and white males prepared for battle. White male children were quickly accepted into the drum and bugle corps, although a few had to lie about their ages to get in. Some of them may have understood something of the issues involved, including slavery and preserving the union, but historian Jim Murphy found from the letters they wrote to family members back home, most lads craved adventure.[6]

African-American youngsters living in the North understood the war to be a fight for liberty. More than 12,000 of New York City's one million residents in 1860 were African-American. Many were fugitive slaves and their children.[7] At the outbreak of war in 1861, African-Americans in the Northern states organized to support the war effort. Men and boys formed drilling companies to train themselves; women and girls made flags, prepared to

serve as nurses, and even offered to fight. However, government officials refused to let African-Americans join the armed forces, in part because the Lincoln administration was not ready to equate the war effort with a movement to free the slaves. In New York City and elsewhere, chiefs of police and other city officials banned drilling exercises by African-Americans, calling them "disorderly gatherings."[8] As the war dragged on, the need for manpower mounted. Finally, after the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, Congress passed a resolution allowing persons of African descent to join the army, but in segregated regiments.

Frederick Douglass, an abolitionist and former slave living in Rochester, New York, assisted recruiting efforts for the first Northern black regiment, the Massachusetts 54th Regiment. This regiment included men and boys from several Northeastern states, including New York.[9]

Once boys were in the army, their task was not an easy one. First, they marched. Most troops travelled on foot, tramping for miles in dust, rain, and snow. The younger lads set the pace with their drum beats. When they were not marching, they drilled, again to the drums, to learn the signals which would help them stay together in battle.[10]

On the march, the boys and men slept in tents, ate rations of hard bread and dried beans, potatoes, rice, and onions, washed down with coffee. Sometimes they were able to buy better food from peddlers who followed the troops, but these things were expensive. Eggs were six dollars a dozen, and drummer boys earned only thirteen dollars a month. Sometimes army rations included fresh meat, almost never eggs, butter, milk, or sugar.[11]

On the battlefield, casualties were high. Hundreds of drummer boys were killed and thousands more were wounded as they stayed at their posts in the thick of the fight, surrounded by smoke and the cries of the dying. In this war, with its loud new cannons, mortars, and repeating rifles, the drums were scarcely audible.[12]

The Union army hired African-American children and adults as members of a non-military civilian workforce in the years before African-American males were allowed to serve in the armed forces. They worked as spies, helped the Union navy navigate in southern waters, foraged for food in the countryside, and dug fortresses. They worked as teamsters, chopped wood, and picked cotton. African-American adults were paid eight to ten dollars a month, less than the thirteen dollars a month earned by white drummer boys in the Union army. We do not know what wages were paid to African-American children, but it was probably even less.

Discrimination against African-American males continued even after they were admitted to the regular army. Frederick Douglass was dismayed to find that soldiers in the African-American regiments were paid at the same rate as laborers, not as combat soldiers.[13]

Children At Home

On the home front in the North, tens of thousands of white children entered the workforce for the first time to replace men who had gone to war. There are no firm figures, but historians estimate that at the war's end, children made up 13 percent of the workforce in Massachusetts textile mills; 22 percent of the millworkers were under the age of sixteen in Philadelphia. Charles Loring Brace of the New York City Children's Aid Society estimated that more than 100,000 children worked in New York City's factories at that time.[14]

Unlike children of European descent, African-American children (and adults) began to lose employment during the war, especially those who had jobs as domestic servants. Irish servant girls began to replace African-American children and adults as domestic workers in the years before and during the Civil War.[15]

War production slowed down some industries at first, but soon industries expanded their operations. Textile factories at Cohoes switched from cotton goods to wool for blankets and uniforms. The Burden ironworks at Troy was enlisted to make thousands of horseshoes for the cavalry, iron nails and spikes for railroad ties, and massive iron plates for the Union battleship, the *Monitor*.[16]

The war also created new occupations for the women and children left behind when men went into battle. Nursing, clerical work, and school teaching opened up as respectable occupations for single educated white women. Old occupations persisted, as well. Both African-American and white women found work in the ever-expanding sweated industries and new immigrants were welcomed into factory work. These jobs required no formal education or training.

Of course, women and children were unaccustomed to working for wages. Often they did not know how much work should be expected of them or how much they should expect to be paid and

were therefore particularly vulnerable to exploitation by their employers.

Employers, eager to meet the growing wartime demand for uniforms and shoes, rushed to organize production on a larger scale. Contractors bought sewing machines and crowded from 30 to 100 girls in a shop where they were paid by the piece. The girls who could work fastest earned the most money, but few earned more than 25 or 30 cents a day.[17] Many women and children worked at home. Women rented their sewing machines, but the cost of the machine left them only pennies a day in wages. Children helped home sewers by pulling basting threads and by going to and from the contractor's to pick up garments to be sewed and to return finished work. Occasionally a shop owner would allow a child or two to become a "learner" in his factory. These children were not paid for their work, however, and often the "teacher" was one of the sewing girls who was expected to supervise the children without extra pay.[18]

For the children in the factories, work became increasingly unsafe after 1850. In textile mills, for example, women and children lost their fingers in flying machinery and choked in the dust and stale air. In cigarmaking workshops, children from four to twelve years of age chopped tobacco leaves in crowded rooms filled with tobacco dust.[19] And in the iron industry, while increased numbers of boys found work, more children were burned or maimed in the atmosphere of molten iron, open furnaces, and heavy machinery.[20]

Unfortunately, while wages for skilled workers increased during the war, children performed unskilled labor and were therefore little affected by rising wages. And because prices rose as well, families found themselves impoverished despite higher incomes. Adult wages rose between 50 and 60 percent, but prices increased almost 100 percent. For example, eggs went from 15 cents per dozen in 1861 to 25 cents in 1862 and potatoes rose from $1.50 per bushel to $2.25. Bread prices nearly doubled and rent and fuel also went up. A family of six needed $16 per week for necessities in July of 1864. One month later, the figure was $18.50. Neither figure included expenditures for medicine, transportation, clothing, or any luxuries.[21]

Cries For Reform

In New York during the War, private reform groups such as the Children's Aid Society publicized the living and working conditions for poor children. Wartime inflation spelled poverty for many families; countless others lost their male breadwinners on the battlefield. But reformers focused on helping the children of the poor, not the entire family. These middle-class reformers often felt it was best to remove the child from his or her home. To that end, they established institutions, such as orphanages and boardinghouses, to help the children of the poor. The New York City Newsboy's Lodging House was one such institution. It housed more than 27,000 boys between 1861 and 1866.[22]

Whether they lived with their parents or in one of these institutions, children learned to fend for themselves. Many learned to be street-smart at an early age. The boys in Horatio Alger's novels were modeled on clever street children who learned to live on both sides of the law at mid-century, selling matches and newspapers, shining shoes, and stealing when necessary.[23]

Reformers were not trying to save children from work. Instead, they saw work as the salvation of poor children. They advocated work which required some degree of skill, and they believed that farm work was the ideal occupation for city youth. The Children's Aid Society opened industrial training schools for some children, and continued its pre-war policy of sending other children to the countryside to work on farms. (See chapter 6.) New York had no organized opposition to either sweated labor or factory work during the Civil War.

After the war, other state legislatures investigated conditions of child labor, but New York State investigations into working conditions for factory children in New York's mills were still twenty years away.[24] In 1866, a Massachusetts investigation found children as young as seven working fourteen hour days in the cotton mills. Factory overseers had recruited many of the young employees from nearby schools.[25]

Indentured Orphan Children

Orphanages in New York State retained the indenture system for the children of the poor throughout the nineteenth century, binding them out by contract to families who could give them work or teach them a trade. As criticism of slavery grew, however, so did criticism of indenture, which seemed like slavery to some.[26] Indeed, children of slaves born in New York State between

1799 and 1827 were indentured to their masters in a form of quasi-slavery under the 1799 manumission law of the state. Girls served for a period of twenty-five years and boys for a period of twenty-eight years. Therefore, daughters born to enslaved parents as late as 1827 were not actually freed persons in New York State until 1852; their sons remained indentured to the former masters of their parents until 1855.[27] (See chapter 2.) Nevertheless, orphanages advocated putting children to work, and continued to use indenture for both African-American and white children in their care.

When orphaned children reached the age of twelve, they were indentured to families to work or learn a trade until they reached the age of twenty-one. The host family paid a fee, which the orphanage kept for the children until their terms of service were ended. The children in the New York Colored Orphan Asylum were indentured to both white families and African-American ones.[28]

Orphanages, like other child-saving activities, were segregated. African-American children had fewer advocates than children of European descent, and were shunned by institutions for white children. Orphaned African-American children often lived in jails or in the street, where they supported themselves by working as chimney sweeps or by begging.[29]

Before the Civil War, New York City had only one orphanage for African-American children. The New York Colored Orphan Asylum was founded in 1836 by white Quakers who provided the only institution for African-American orphans. The Quakers modeled their institution on those for white children.[30]

During the Civil War, the New York Colored Orphan Asylum was a target of racial violence during the New York City Draft Riots of 1863.

The New York City Draft Riots[31]

Most people expected the war would last only a few short weeks or months. In the summer of 1863, many people were already out of patience with rising prices and the increasing competition for jobs among men, women, and children led to much social tension in urban areas.

Casualties on the battlefields were high, and to ensure the supply of combat troops, Congress passed the first national draft law, the Federal Conscription Act of 1863. The law established a lottery to select men for military service. All men between the ages of twenty and thirty-five and all married men between the ages of thirty-five and forty-four were subject to military service with one important exception: the law said that anyone could avoid military service. A man could send someone in his place or he could pay $300. Consequently, the burden of military service fell on poor men and their families, who often did not earn $300 in an entire year.[32]

Many people opposed a law that so obviously favored the wealthy. This law hit poor families with young children especially hard, especially Irish immigrants. The poor protested that they could not afford to pay for a substitute, and if they should be killed, their widows and orphans would join the already bursting poorhouses and their children would trade the schoolroom for the sweatshop.

Supporters of the Confederacy further inflamed the opposition to the draft by predicting that if the South were defeated and slavery abolished, workmen in the North would lose their jobs to hordes of freed slaves who would surely come north in search of work.

When the law went into effect in the summer of 1863, protests against the draft erupted in a number of northern cities. The most violent occurred in New York, where anti-draft rioters went on a rampage for four days. There is no definitive number, but historians estimate that probably hundreds were killed and wounded during the violence. At least eleven African-Americans were lynched. Targets of the riot included the draft office, homes of the wealthy, the City's African-American population, and abolitionists, including the Quakers who ran the New York Colored Orphan Asylum.

Rioters looted the New York Colored Orphan Asylum and burned it to the ground. The children and their teachers managed to escape.[33] After four days of carnage, Lincoln sent in federal troops to stop the riot. The draft resumed the following month.

Aftermath

The Draft Riots were a symptom of unresolved problems of New York and other urban areas in the North: low wages, unregulated industry, residential overcrowding, ethnic and racial tensions. Child labor was part of this reality, and while parents may have deplored the working conditions of their children, they were still desperate for the income they produced. Child labor was not officially

defined as a problem, however, until the 1880s.

After the Draft Riots, some African-Americans began to leave New York City. Before the Civil War, New York was often a destination for runaway slaves, and its free black population reached 12,000 in 1860 as many former slaves married and started families there. But by 1865, the African-American population had fallen to just over 9,000.[34] As other immigrant groups continued to pour into the city, bringing even more men, women, and children into the labor market, wages for unskilled workers plummeted to increasingly low levels.

Racial and ethnic tensions increased. Orphanages for white children still refused to shelter African-American children. In 1866, a group of African-Americans organized an institution for poor African-American children. The Brooklyn Colored Orphans Asylum sheltered not only orphans, but children's whose mothers could not support them.[35]

Beyond The War Years

The Civil War itself did not fundamentally change the working lives of children in New York State, but it did foreshadow the industrial development of the postwar years when larger factories and new transportation systems continued to grow, develop, and involve more of the population. Just as more children entered the mills and factories during the Civil War years, their numbers continued to grow in New York State in the two decades after the War's end.

After the War, the working lives of children would continue to depend on the fortunes of their families. For some New York families, including those who owned large farms with milling operations, the post-war years brought prosperity and an expanding market for specialized farming.[36] Yet, as historian George Rogers Taylor notes, other families saw their incomes fluctuate with the seasons and economic recessions and depressions. Very poor families stayed at the bottom of the income levels and their numbers increased as the population continued to grow through immigration. Others who had been more of the "middling sort," saw their status decline, particularly families headed by craftsmen whose skills were replaced by machinery. However, in some skilled trades, such as metalworking, toolmaking, and the building trades, craftsmen were in high demand to build machinery for the new factories and housing for an expanding population.

In the decades after the Civil War, children whose family fortunes were improving could expect to go to school instead of to work. The skills these children learned in school best served new occupations, including clerical work, bookkeeping, and teaching.[37] Education would become a new kind of apprenticeship for children, but it would be many decades before all children in New York State could expect to consider the school as their primary place of work.[38]

Endnotes

1. "Flowers Honor War Dead," *New York Newsday*, July 24, 1991. Clarence McKenzie is buried in Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn. A life-sized statue marks his grave. For a vivid account of life for boys in the army, see Jim Murphy, *The Boys' War: Confederate and Union Soldiers Talk About the Civil War* (New York: Clarion Books, 1990).

2. Phillip Shaw Paludan, *"A People's Contest": The Union and the Civil War, 1861-1865*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 183.

3. Daniel J. Walkowitz, *Worker City, Company Town: Iron and Cotton Worker Protest in Troy and Cohoes, New York, 1855-1884* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 153.

4. Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage Earning Women in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 75-78.

5. Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1980), 228.

6. Murphy, *The Boys' War*, 39.

7. Iver Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 267.

8. Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War* (New York: DaCapo Press, 1983), 29.

9. Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War*, 22-41; Nathan Irvin Huggins, *Slave and Citizen: The Life of Frederick Douglass* (New York: Harper Collins, 1980), 88-93.

10. Murphy, *The Boys' War*, 27, 40.

11. Ibid., 46-49.

12. Ibid., 41.

13. Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 8; Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War*, 92-99; Huggins, *Slave and Citizen*, 88.

14. Paludan, *"A People's Contest,"* 183.

15. See Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

16. Walkowitz, *Worker City, Company Town*, 22-24.

17. Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work*, 76.

18. Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work*, 76; Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York City, 1789-1860* (Urbana, IL: The University of Illinois Press, 1986), 122.

19. Paludan, *"A People's Contest,"* 183-184; Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work*, 75-85.

20. Paludan, *"A People's Contest,"* 183-184; Walkowitz, *Worker City, Company Town*, 109.

21. Paludan, *"A People's Contest,"* 183.

22. Ibid.

23. See Alan Trachtenberg, "Introduction," in Horatio Alger, Jr., *Ragged Dick or Street Life in New York with the Boot Blacks* (New York: Signet Classic, 1990), v-xx.

24. In 1866, Massachusetts conducted an investigation of post-war working conditions for children. Paludan, *"A People's Contest,"* 184. For the New York investigation, see State of New York. *Second Annual Report of the Bureau of Statistics of Labor of the State of New York, for the Year 1884.* (Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1885). See also Walter Trattner, *Crusade for the Children: A History of the National Child Labor Committee and Child Labor Reform in America* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970).

25. Paludan, *"A People's Contest,"* 184.

26. "Indenture" was called "foster care" by 1918. See Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America:1820-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 94-107; Carleton Mabee, "Charity in Travail: Two Orphan Asylums for Blacks," *New York History* 55 (January 1974), 69-70.

27. Elizabeth Blackmar, *Manhattan for Rent, 1780-1850* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 56.

28. Mabee, "Charity in Travail," 55-78.

29. Ibid.

30. Mabee, "Charity in Travail," 55-78.

31. The following section is based on Iver Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots.*

32. Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots*, 8.

33. Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots*, 17-42; Mabee, "Charity in Travail," 58.

34. Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots*, 267.

35. Mabee, "A Charity's Travail," 58.

36. See, for example, Yasuo Okada, "Squire's Diary: New York Agriculture in Transition," *New York History* 52 (October 1971), 396-422; Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780-1860* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990, 3-21.

37. See Mary Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865;* Michael Katz, *The Irony of Early School Reform: Educational Innovation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Massachusetts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968).

38. George Rogers Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution: 1815-1860* (London: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1951), 392-394.

Teaching Strategies for Chapter 7

Background for Activity A

The Civil War had a dramatic impact on the lives of individual Americans, especially children. The Civil War demanded much from children, whether they worked as members of the armed forces or as members of the work force on the home front.

Activity A

Students will write a newspaper article based on an hypothetical interview with a child who lived during the Civil War.

Directions

1. Provide students with background information from Janet Greene's essay on "The Civil War Years." Discuss the role that technology played in the social changes experienced by child workers during the Civil War. A discussion of the wartime economy including inflation and wages is also necessary.

2. Additional resources include: Ken Burns's *The Civil War*, Civil War photographs, diaries, journals, letters and newspaper accounts. There are countless resources.

3. Divide the class into three groups by having students count off by three.

4. Distribute student worksheet "Civil War Interview."

5. Assign each group a different child to interview: factory girl, drummer boy, or young black man. While research should be done individually or in pairs rather than in the larger group, it is easier for students to share ideas and information gathered if members of the larger groups work near one another. Hints for students:

   a. A factory girl who was an orphan may discuss pride in her work, added responsibility, the possibility of forced indenture, discrimination in the workplace, improved technology, the monotony and danger of factory work.

   b. A drummer boy may address fear, sadness, loathing of the violence he has seen, different views of the war, life in the soldiers' camp.

   c. A young black man may focus on his anger over being banned from joining the army, the New York City riots, his views on the significance of the war, discrimination faced in the workplace.

6. When the newspaper articles are completed students can present them orally and/or display them around the room. Grading can be based on the completeness of the information as well as a "newspaper" format.

Civil War Interview

You are a reporter for a New York City newspaper in 1865 at the end of the Civil War. Your editor has told you to interview one of the following New Yorkers and report how the war changed her/his life.

- girl working in a factory in New York
- drummer boy in a New York regiment
- a young black man in New York City

Your article should address the following questions:

- Who are you?
- What was your life like before the war?
- What was your life like during the war?
- Describe your working conditions during the war.
- Why did you work at that job?
- When and how did your life begin to change?
- Did your life improve or worsen?
- How did you feel about the change?
- Describe any discrimination you faced.
- How did the economy affect your ability to survive?
- What was your reaction to the New York City draft riots?
- Describe the feelings you experienced during the war years.

At the end of your article make a prediction about the future of the person you interviewed based on

- economic conditions as the war ends.
- your knowledge of the child labor situation of the time.
- the direction technology seems to be taking.

Make a small poster to display your article. It should appear to be cut out of the newspaper. It can also include a picture of the person interviewed.

Background for Activity B

During The Civil War was the first time images of war were brought into the home on the front pages of newspapers. Using photographs of the Civil War allows students to witness firsthand the brutality of this conflict on its participants including children.

Activity B

Students will analyze photographs to make conclusions about a boy's life in the army during the Civil War.

Directions

1. Provide students with the background from Janet Greene's essay and photographs from *The Boys' War* by Jim Murphy (New York: Clarion Books, 1990). Many of the pictures in this book can be located in other resources.

2. Distribute the student worksheet "Photograph Analysis." Review the directions to ensure students understand how to use it. Explain that the condition of the photograph may be good, poor, torn, faded, folded, etc. The kind of photograph will probably be black and white. The "Photograph Analysis" can be used with any available photographs from the Civil War. Use photograph analysis early in teaching the Civil War or as a concluding activity. Tell students battlefield photographers sometimes posed the picture by moving around things and bodies.

3. Divide the class into groups of three or four to study the photos. Provide each group with one or more photographs. Have groups report their findings to the class. Students should copy in their notes conclusions drawn from the photographs as well as questions raised which could not be answered. Answers to these questions may surface during their study of the war.

Vocabulary

regiment
labor union
fugitive slave
segregate
abolitionist
rations
teamsters
discrimination
domestic servants
inflation
orphanage
1799 manumission law
conscription
recession

Photograph Analysis

Student Researcher:

Date of Analysis:

Information about the photograph:

Size: Kind: Condition:

Approximate Date Taken: Location Taken:

Photographer: Source of Photo:

In your mind divide the photo into four equal parts. Rotate through the parts to fill in the chart below with details of the photo.

PEOPLE	OBJECTS	SURROUNDINGS	ACTIVITIES	MOOD

What are the most important parts of the photo? Why are they important?

What questions are raised by the photo?

What two conclusions can you make about the life of boys in service during the Civil War?

Suggested Resources

Biographical and Historical Material

Alcott, Louisa May. *Work: A Story of Experience*. New York: Schoken Books, 1977.

American Social History Project. *Who Built America? Working People and the Nation's Economy, Politics, Culture and Society*. Volume One. New York: Pantheon Books, 1989.

Brent, Linda [Harriet Jacobs]. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Javanovich, 1973.

Cobblestone Magazine—"The History of Labor" Vol. 13, No. 8, Oct. 1992.

Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. Boston: St. Martin's Press, 1993.

Franklin, Benjamin. *Autobiography and Other Writings*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Gompers, Samuel. *Seventy Years of Life and Labor: An Autobiography*. Edited and with an introduction by Nick Salvatore. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 1984. (See especially chapter one: "A Young Worker, 1850–70, From East Side London to East Side New York.")

Meltzer, Milton. *Cheap Raw Material*. New York: Viking, 1994.

Robinson, Harriet. *Loom and Spindle, Or Life Among the Early Mill Girls*. Kalua, HI: Press Pacifica, 1976.

Stein, Leon. *Out of the Sweatshop: The Struggle for Industrial Democracy*. New York: Quadrangle Books, 1977.

Zinn, Howard. *A People's History of the United States*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1980.

Fiction

Alger, Jr., Horatio. *Ragged Dick*. New York: NAL Dutton, 1990, reprinted from original (1868).

Avi. *Encounter at Easton*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980.

Avi. *Night Journeys*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1979.

Beatty, Patricia. *Turn Homeward, Hannalee*. New York: William Morrow & Company, 1984.

Collier, James L., and Christopher Collier. *Clock*. New York: Delacorte Press, 1992.

Collier, James L., and Christopher Collier. *My Brother Sam is Dead*. Portland, Oregon: Four Winds Press, 1974.

Fields, Rachel. *Calico Bush*. New York: Macmillian Publishing, 1966.

Fleischman, Paul. *Saturnalia*. New York: Harper Collins Child Books, 1990.

Forbes, Esther. *Johnny Tremain*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971.

Freedman, Russell. *Immigrant Kids*. New York: Scholastic Books, 1992.

Murphy, Jim. *The Boys' War*. New York: Clarion Books, 1990.

Nixon, Joan Lowery. *Family Apart*. New York: Bantam Books, 1989.

Nixon, Joan Lowery. *Orphan Train*. New York: Bantam Books, 1989.

O'Dell, Scott. *The Serpent Never Sleeps*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987.

Paterson, Katherine. *Lyddie*. New York: Lodestar Books, 1991.

Sargent, Dave. *Callie*. Springfield, MO: Ozark Mountian Publishing, 1991.

Movies

"Harlan County, U.S.A." Dir. Barbara Kopple. 1977. C-103. (Documentary)

"Molly Maguires." Dir. Martin Ritt, with Sean Connery, Richard Harris, Samantha Eggar, Frank Finlay, Art Lund, Anthony Costello. 1970. C-123m.

"Norma Rae." Dir. Martin Ritt, with Sally Field, Ron Leibman, Beau Bridges, Pat Hingle, Barbara Baxley, Gail Strickland, Lonny Chapman, Noble Willingham, Grace Zabriskie. 1979. C-113.

"Orphan Train." Dir. William A. Graham, with Jill Eikenberry, Kevin Dobson, Linda Manz, Graham Fletcher-Cook, Melissa Michaelson, Glenn Close, Morgan Farley, Severn Darden. 1979. C-150.

About the Authors

Kathleen Cotugno-Surin is an English teacher at Niskayuna Middle School, Niskayuna, New York. She has written curriculum and designed an integrated English/social studies student portfolio. She developed an extensive unit on the Holocaust for the middle level using historical literature and primary source documents in an integrated approach to the teaching of English.

Janet Wells Greene is a Ph.D. candidate in American History at New York University. She recently completed a year as a Smithsonian Fellow at the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., and is at work on her dissertation which is entitled, "Camera Wars: Coal Miners and the Politics of Photography in the Truman Era." Greene was field coordinator for the Harry Van Arsdale Labor History Project at the Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives at New York University from 1988 through 1991. She is a former faculty member of the Southern Appalachian Labor School of the West Virginia Institute of Technology.

Raymond A. LeBel is a social studies teacher at Niskayuna Middle School, Niskayuna, New York. He has written curriculum for the *Crossroads* project, a federally funded educational partnership between Niskayuna and The Sage Council for Citizenship Education to develop a comprehensive and seamless American history curriculum for all grade levels. LeBel has also played an active role in Niskayuna's Middle School redesign.

Stephanie A. Schechter has been a social studies teacher for twenty-three years. She currently teaches at Niskayuna Middle School, Niskayuna, New York, where she and Kathy Cotugno-Surin developed interdisciplinary units for social studies and English. Schechter is co-editor for 1993-1996 of the *Social Science Record*, the journal of the New York State Council for the Social Studies. She was a curriculum writer for the *Crossroads* curriculum and has been a member of the Labor Legacy Project since its inception.

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, *or*, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information reguarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor: Council for Citizenship Education	
Address: Russell Sage College Troy, NY 12180	
Price Per Copy: $5.00 ea.	Quantity Price: over 5 copies, $3.00 ea

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name and address of current copyright/reproduction rights holder:

Name: n/a

Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

If you are making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, you may return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Facility
1301 Piccard Drive, Suite 300
Rockville, Maryland 20850-4305
Telephone: (301) 258-5500

(Rev. 9/91)